GLORY OF THIRUKKURAL



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Thirukkural, known as Universal Scripture is the epitome of ancient lore and wisdom. It has withstood the test of time. It is universal, knows no national boundaries, language barriers or historical limitations. The composition is in couplets expounding varied aspects of life in all its entirety. It is a cogent commentary on human values and is encyclopaedic both in concept and content.

Selvi J Jayalalithaa

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

INTRODUCTION

Thirukkural written 2000 years ago, is a treatise par excellence on the 'art of living'. It is a treasure house of worldly knowledge, ethical guidance and wisdom; it is a masterpiece of Tamil literature, one of the highest and purest expressions of human thoughts. It is a synthesis of the best moral teachings of the world. No literary work can ever approach anywhere nearer to the purity of Thirukkural.

Thiruvalluvar pierced atom and injected seven seas into it and compressed it into what we have today as Kural.

Thirukkural is a book of all ages and Tiruvalluvar is an eminent, excellent and exceptional scholar with divine qualities. He belongs not only to Tamil Nadu but also to the whole world, since his profound knowledge and subtle thoughts are universal and acclaimed by men of all faiths.

Many scholars across the globe have eulogized Thiruvalluvar. This book "**Glory of Thirukkural**" is a garland of tributes paid by such eminent personalities.

A journey through this book will open new vistas of understanding of Thirukkural and Thiruvalluvar.

M. RAJARAM

FOREWORD

Whenever I read a couplet from Thirukural here and there, as I do daily, I am surprised at almost every reading at its freshness and relevance to the problems of our times – for such is the Universality and Humanism.

- DR.YU HSI
World Poet - Taiwan

We take pride in bringing out the publication of the book titled "**GLORY OF THIRUKURAL**" which consists of commendations of the core values in Thirukkural by eminent Tamil savants and scholars across the world. **Dr.M.Rajaram, I.A.S.,** Secretary to Government of Tamilnadu, who has beautifully translated Thirukkural into English a decade ago and hailed by all quarters of Bibliophiles worldwide.

He has been a unique guiding force to bring out this publication fit for a pleasant and purposeful reading. International Institute of Tamil Studies places it on record the sense of gratitude for the best support he has given us in this endeavour.

Dr.G. Vijayaraghavan
Director
International Institute of Tamil Studies

THE BARD OF UNIVERSE

Sage Valluvar, priest of your lowly clan
No tongue repeats, no speech reveals your name
Yet, all things changing, dies not your fame
For you are a bard of universal man.
And still your "Book" above the waters wans
Virtue, true wealth, and joy, and beings' aim
In sweetest mystic couplets does proclaim
Where winds sea-wafted palmy forests fan.
Haply undreamed of "Visions" glad your eyes
In realms beyond your fabled sevenfold birth
And clouds of darkness from your spirit roll.
While lands far off have heard with strange surprise
Faint echoes of your song. Through all the earth
Men hail you brother, seer of spotless soul!

- G. U. Pope

CHERISHED WISH –PROCLAMATION

"Our hands shall carry the Holy Kural and our feet shall tread towards the nooks and corners of our hamlets.

Our voice shall hail the greatness of Kural Bountifully.

The message of Valluvar, hitherto unexplained shall reach our masses.

Let us take Kural to the pinnacle of Fame of the world literature.

Its glory be magnified to assert its place of prime.

Be you endowed with intense devotion, sustained interest and dedication

And propagate the priceless gems of Thiruvalluvar."

-Arignar Anna

TAMIL NADU, THE HOLY LAND OF THIRUKKURAL

Welcome to the holy land of Tamil Nadu.

Blessed is the land with antique culture with modernity.

Nurturing civilisation and hospitality to the foes.

This is the holy land that gave unto the world the classic of classics.

The holy Thirukkural of Saint Thiruvalluvar.

You learned fraternity of the globe be our esteemed guest.

Your smile, while staying showers happiness on us.

Command us to serve you to serve unto the Supreme being.

CONTENT

I. THIRUKKURAL - STRUCTURE AND STYLE

Age cannot wither him nor stale his infinite variety

Thirukkural is considered to provide the code of conduct for the humanity of the planet earth for all time, which makes the past meet the present and creates the future.

- Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

Age of Thirukkural

The age of Ilamcetcenni 'Father of Karikala Chola' contemporary of Ugraperuvaluthi should probably be fixed between 30 and 50 AD. This is the age of the Kural when our Valluvar, the Prince of Moralists produced it to the professors of the last Tamil Academy presided by Pandya Ugra Peruvaluthi.

-D.Savariraya Pillai

In the light of the following: (1) From the linguistic and literary aspect Thirukkural reveals the later developments of Tamil language and literature, which could not be found in Tolkappiyam, the earliest Tamil grammar. Hence it is clear that Thirukkural is posterior to Tolkappiyam. (2) Since the age of Tolkappiyam has been fixed as the third century B.C., then Thirukkural would have been composed later than the third century B.C. (3) The Sangam Classics, viz; the Ten idylls, the Eight Anthologies and the Twin epics are assigned to

the early centuries of the Christian Era. (4) Many of the phrases, lines, ideas and couplets of Thirukkural have been profusely used in the Sangam Classics, which bear ample testimony to the fact that Thirukkural would have been composed earlier than these anthologies and the twin epics.

So it is clear that Thirukkural might have been composed earlier than these literary compositions, i.e in the Pre Christian Era. Hence, it is reasonable to assign the period between B.C. 100 and the down of the Christian Era, as the probable period for the composition of Thirukkural.

-Dr. M.Rajamanickam

The oldest surviving vernacular literature is in the Dravidian language, Tamil, which includes works possible as old as the first century of the Christian Era. The best known classical Tamil work is the Kural ("Aphoristic Stanzas") by the weaver Thiruvalluvar, who lived sometime between the first and fifth centuries of the Christian Era.

-W. Norman Brown

Even if we ascribe him to the second century before Christ, he could not have escaped Aryan or North Indian influences which had already mingled inextricably with Tamil culture – as attested by *purananuru*. There is good reason too to assume that he was a Jain. So he was doubly exposed – to the general Northern influences in the community and to the more intensive influence of Jain monks from the North. He refers often

to a consensus of earlier works to reinforce some of his points – and some of these works at least were in Sanskrit or Pali.

-Prof. V.Subramanian

Style and Form

The Kural consists of 1330 verses and vivid couplets in the metric form known as the Kural *venba*, one of the most distinctive and difficult of Tamil poetical metres. This is thought by some scholars to be an imitation of the Sanskrit sutra form. The Kural is the earliest extant work in this metre, and the poet reveals a complete mastery of this metrical form. The first line of each couplet consists of four metrical feet, and the second of three, the last foot in the second line being a peculiar kind of incomplete foot.

The poem treats of virtue, wealth, and love, in a string of short, epigrammatic verses, rivalling, in their crisp and cutting vigour, the soft, language grace of the Naladiyar.

- Herbert H. Gover

Thiruvalluvar, guided by advice, had the address to select three topics of general interest and to avoid entirely everything that might be disputed or might be offensive to any of every sect adding to this precaution great ingenuity of thought, and peculiar beauty and elegance of language, he produced a work which united every suffrage, and stands confessed, even to the present day, to be the best and chief of all compositions in the polished dialect.

-William Taylor

It was one of the couplets in the third part (*KAMATTUPPAL*) of the poem referring to the two looks

of a maid-the one which kills and the other which cures the look that led Dr.Graul to admire Tamil poetry and study the Kural.

The Kural is composed in the purest Tamil. In about 12,000 words which the poet has employed to convey his thoughts there are scarcely fifty of Sanskrit Origin. He throws the purity of Bunyan's English completely into the shade. No known Tamil work can ever approach anywhere nearer to the purity of 'Kural'. It is a standing rebuke to the modern Tamil. Thiruvalluvar has clearly proved the richness, melody and power of his mother-tongue.

The 'Kural' cannot be improved nor its plan made more perfect. It is a perfect mosaic in itself. The slightest change in the size, shape or colour of a single stone would mar the beauty of the whole.

It is refreshing to think that a nation which has produced so great a man and so unique a work cannot be a hopeless, despicable race. The morality he preached could not have grown except on an essentially moral soil. To those, therefore, who labour for the salvation of the Tamil People, the 'Kural' must be a work of peculiar nay, intense interest."

- Rev. J. Lazarus

The Kural of Thiruvalluvar, a work consisting 1330 distiches, or poetical aphorisms, on almost every subject, connected with morals and political-economy and which is regarded by all Tamils (and perhaps justly) finest composition of which the Tamils boast, appears to be not only the best but the oldest Tamil work of any extent which is now in existence.

-Dr. R.Caldwell

But whether he (Valluvar) borrows, his material from Sanskrit or follows Tamil tradition, he displays an originality of treatment and a sequence of ideas entirely his own, which contributes much to the merit of the poem.

- Prof. P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar

Thiruvalluvar, the author of the Kural, occupies first place as a moralist among the Tamils. Indeed it is generally acknowledged that there is no treatise equal to the Kural in any Indian language.

- Dr. John Murdoch

The Kural, on the other hand all the time stays at the level of general principles, ie., what may be called a mandatory ethics.

- Dr. E.H. Hopkins

A Classic with a Perfect Structure

The content of the Thirukkural is undoubtedly patterned. In fact it is structured very carefully, so that no 'structural gaps' occur in the text. Every single couplet is indispensable for the structure's whole. Every distich has, so to say, two kinds of meaning if isolated and thus removed from the content-structure the couplets lose a very important meaning component – their 'structured meaning'. An isolated couplet may be charming and interesting in itself, but it is just a 'wise saying', a moral maxim, a 'literary proverb' in perfect form, possessing, in varying degrees, the prosodic and rhetoric qualities of **gnomic poetry**. It acquires a 'structural meaning' only in relation to other couplets, forming higher patterns, and finally, in relation to the entire text, which forms a perfect total structure. This fault is in sharp contrast with the early classical poetry, where each stanza was a perfectly self contained unit,

various stanzas were gathered in anthologies, while, as already stressed, the Thirukkural is not an anthology.

- Dr. S.Gopalan

Three Cups of Honey

The humming bees bestow honey as a boon to the humanity. In the same way, Thiruvalluvar the poet and philosopher of ancient Tamilnadu has given three cups of honey as a gift to mankind, in his masterpiece.

In his didactic work Thirukkural one can taste the honey of the dramatic monologues of the lovers, the sweetness of the 'Home-sweet Home', the humane ideals and the egalitarian mysticism.

- Dr. T. Muthukkannappar

The Kural's primary themes touch on the rational form of the process of moral consciousness and on the substantive matter of giving. Destructive conduct like gambling, also a pet object of vedic and later Indian criticism, can be avoided by learning from its effects. Similarly, the consequences of poverty are not of blessing, but a curse (Nos. 751, 1045). Greed is a worse curse; the 'feelings of I and mine" being "nought but vanity and pride" (No. 346). It is giving and sharing which makes the world go round without it.

- Dr. Roderic Hindery

Thirukkural is a great work; and its author must have been a great man, and a great genius; ..."Man in the totality of his relationship is the subject of the Kural. After a 'cosmic' introduction, which praises God, rain, supermen and virtue, the author of the book turns towards man, whose personality is gradually unfolded in 'ever expanding concentric cycles'

within the family with his wife and children, within the community with his friends, and within his country in his relationship towards the ruler and the state. Man is shown not in a static state but in the development, and the force that is behind this dynamism is sympathy, even love, manifesting itself through kind thoughts, sweet words, and right actions.

- Dr. Kamil Zvelebil

The broad plan of *Poruṭpaal* is set out in its first couplet restating the Seven-limb theory-by- calling six of them army, people, resources, counsel, allies and forts, attributes of the first limb, the king. The rest of the book deals with these seven beginning, with the king and ending with the people. A lot of material on each of these topics is drawn from the Arthasastra and perhaps some Smritis-though every chapter and verse cannot find their exact counter-parts in them.

- Prof. V. Subramanian

Kamathuppal - A Superb Love Poetry

Thiruvalluvar's *Kamattuppal* is utterly different from any of the Sanskrit Kamasastras. While Vatsyayana's work (and all later Sanskrit erotology) is Sastra, that is, objective and scientific analysis of sex, the third part of the Kural is a poetic picture of eros, of ideal love, of its dramatic situations." As a work of literary art, reveals a single structural plan, and looks like a work of a single master... **In the erotic couplets of the third part (*Kamattuppal*), the teacher, the preacher in Valluvar has stepped aside and the poet speaks almost the language of the superb love poetry of the classical Age.**

- Dr. Kamil Zvelebil

One should never contemplate the couplets in isolation. We must again and again stress that they have true validity and meaning only in their patterned relation to other couplets, and to the whole. And when read and contemplated in this way, Thiruvalluvar's ethics is never that of a Chanakya or a Macchiavelli.

-Dr. Kamil Zvelebil

Let it be said in conclusion that it is almost impossible to truly appreciate the maxims of the Kural through a translation. Thirukkural must be read and re-read in Tamil. This fact, too, reveals something about the nature and degree of its "poetic excellence."

- Dr. Kamil Zvelebil

Metrical Form

The Kural owes much of its popularity to its exquisite poetic form. The brevity rendered necessary by the form gives an oracular effect to the utterances of the great Tamil 'Master of Sentences'. They are the choicest of moral epigrams. Their resemblance to **gnomic poetry of Greece** is remarkable as to their subjects, their sentiments and the state of society when they are uttered. Something of the same kind is found in Greek epigrams, in Martial and the Latin elegiac verse. "There is a beauty in the periodic character of the Tamil construction in many of these verses that read minds, the reader of the happiest efforts of properties".

-Dr. G.U. Pope

Metre for Brevity

Perhaps the author might have chosen this metre for brevity. But within this narrow limit he has commendably used all sorts of poetic devices.

Thirukkural still is the only well-known masterpiece in this type of metre in the field of Tamil Literature.

-Dr. A.Dhamotharan

The style of the Kural was matchless comparable only with the perfection of the style in Greek; the Kural was to Graul the pearl of pearls in this old and rich classical literature of the Tamilians – as also in our time the Kural was called "The greatest masterpiece of Tamil Literature and according to our learned editor, embodying" the rationalisation and synthesis of wisdom and ideas of the earlier Tamil Literature.

-Dr. Arno Lehman

Artistic Grandeur

Thirukkural differs from other Sangam classics in its composition and in the use of metre. It is not a cooperative endeavour of different poets, who lived in different periods. **Kural is a product of a particular individual who established his name and fame as a poet, philosopher and sage of the Sangam Age.**

Thirukkural is remarkable for its range of ideas and variety. It has been best known to the world for its outspoken universalism and attractive modernism. **It expresses the lofty, world transcending ideals of supreme tradition in Tamil.** This didactic literature reveals the originality in ideas, in the art of presentation and the nuances of poetic excellence. The poet breaks the rigidity of conventions by the skillful manipulation of simple innovations and imagery.

-Dr. K.D.Thirunavukkarasu

II. THIRUKKURAL - BLUE JACQUARD DIAMOND

Multidimensional work

Thirukkural is a unique work of literature that will be useful in several ways to the several people of the world. Literary critics master it as a piece of literature and find pleasure in experiencing its artistic grandeur. It can be revered by the righteous people as a holy scripture of any religion and may try to observe the maxims of morals in their day-today life.

The men of public life can find nuances of state-craft, polity and diplomacy in Thirukkural and extol it as great that has enshrined the principles of political science. In this way, everyone can make successful attempts to grace their own sentiments and convictions in Thirukkural. Almost all the didactic works which have attempted to analyse the vicissitudes, trials and tribulations of society, will definitely be useful to a particular community or society. But the greatness of Thirukkural lies in its universal outlook that ignores the space and time.

-Dr. M.Varadarajan

Treatment of Humanism

The poet (Thiruvalluvar) was a keen observer of nature, animate and inanimate, a diligent student of ancient classics on *akapporual* and *purapporul*, on rhetoric and dialectic and morality and statecraft, on

agriculture and medicine, on folklore, tree and plant, love and on sex psychology and erotic diplomacy and was a practical thinker and reformer is beyond all questions.

-Prof. M.S. Purnalingam Pillai

Facets of Thirukkural

When we cut the diamond to various shapes in order to make it very bright and glitter with radiance, it will shine with brilliance in several shades of colour. Likewise when we study deeply and undertake research in Thirukkural's various aspects, there will emerge new and enlightening ideas, which will throw new light on the wisdom of the Tamils.

-Dr. Arignar Anna

Authentic Treasure of Literary Art

The Tamil language, by reason of the conciseness and clarity of its locution and spirit of piety and devotion that has characterised the Tamil people, has brought into existence a devotional literature which is not surpassed in the world and can be ranked, along with Sanskrit and Hebrew productions among the most authentic treasures of literary art. The Tamil country has also had the inestimable advantage of the wise patronage of successive rulers and affluent persons and the regulative and critical appreciations and analysis by successive academies that flourished in the Sangam period and later. It is in that period and with that background that Thiruvalluvar created immortal 'Kural'. Very rarely in the history of the world's literature has such epigrammatic and jewel-like brilliance of ethical and philosophic maxims been united with a mellowed wisdom

that has placed the ideal before itself of a just appraisal of human values and a tolerant understanding of all aspects of human life.

-Dr. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar

Unrivalled Accuracy and Artistry

I venture to think that Thirukkural in Tamil has not its equal in any language or literature. That marvellous work almost makes me feel proud as a Tamilian. The sturdy common sense of it, interlaced in every line with pure poetry, high philosophy and everyday ethics, has made it the finest and most exquisite of literary art. For refined and delicate sentiment and subtle suggestion, the work is veritable show-room. For expression, at once full and forcible, accurate and artistic, it is unrivalled. For the study of that mysterious relationship between thought and word, every verse in it shines like a specimen of the jeweller's art.

- T. Tirunavukkarasu

Balanced View

This immortal work of Valluvar, has attracted the attention of various people of the world who have lived in the different ages of history.

The greatness and many facets of Thirukkural have raised some doubts in the minds of some scholars who are well-known for their partiality and vested interests. Some of them tell that Thirukkural is not an original composition and show some reasons to establish that Thirukkural is an adaption.

They adduce that Kural inculcates the ideas of Trivarga, which are embedded in the Sanskrit treatises on ethics and polity. Others will attribute Sukkraniti and

Manudharmasastra as the main source-books from which Valluvar has borrowed freely.

Though there are some similarities between Kural and the works cited above, the spirit of Thirukkural in its exposition and expression of moral ideals which transcends the barriers of caste and community, land and language and culture and constitutions of the world are quite different from the Sanskrit treatises. No one who is endowed with a balance of mind would deny this basic difference and appreciate the superiority of Thirukkural.

-Dr. K. Sundaramurti

Symbol of God

Thirukkural appears as Ammaiyappar in its form of two feet, ie. long-line and short-line of the couplet form. Besides this, the embodiment of God-goddess into a single form could not be divided into two halves, but it is a composite one. In order to highlight this inseparable aspect of Arthanarisvara, Valluvar symbolically uses the term Adhibhagavan in the first couplet of Thirukkural.

-Prof. A. Sivalinganar

Valuable Work of Mankind

In the thought and expressions of Valluvar, **the concept of 'one world'** appears supreme by the usage of words like land (*Nilam*) larger land (*Manilam*), Universe (*Vaiyam*), earth (*Gnalam*) and world (*Ulakam*).

Valluvar addresses the man –the man of the Universe not like the Gitacharya who preached Arjuna, a devotee, friend and a kith and kin of himself. Hence,

the ideals of moral and social life enunciated by Valluvar have a universal appeal and are applicable to the whole of mankind.

-Dr. S.N. Kandasami

Maxims for a Humane Life

The path paved by Thiruvalluvar for a virtuous life in the world has been acclaimed as an exemplary one. The maxims of Thirukkural induce every man to lead a life that will ensure and enhance him as a real human being.

-Kallai D. Kannan

Optimistic Approach

Thirukkural is the most popular Tamil literature that is known to the people far and near. It has been translated into Telugu by more than half-a-dozen scholars in the last three centuries.

The moral and social values that are enshrined in Thirukkural have some similarity with the epigrams of Vemana but the spirit of approach has a basic different note. The lofty ideals of Thirukkural are optimistic, while the epigrams of Vemana pronounce a philosophy of pessimism.

-Dr. T.S. Manickam

Development of Human Personality

Thirukkural is a book of life of the whole of life. Chapters on ethics, politics, economics and human enjoyment are all actuated by one underlying purpose viz., development of human personality in terms of love and compassion.

-Dr. V.A.Devasenapathi

Work of Universal Appeal

Tamil language can take pride in possessing a priceless jewel in the Thirukkural of Thiruvalluvar, **a work of all times and climes.** It is common knowledge that Thiruvalluvar deals with such topics as the sublimation of the individual, his education, domestic life, statecraft etc. In short it breathes the soul and genius of ancient Tamil culture noted for its catholicity and breadth of outlook. That it is a work of universal appeal is evident from the fact that it is translated in several languages of the world. Paradoxically however, in the Tamil country have heard the name of the poet whose work is intended not merely for their own age or country but for all times and for all mankind.

-N.D. Sundaravadivelu

On Human Relationship

Thirukkural, the most popular Tamil literature is the Bible of the Tamils. It does not highlight the tenets of any particular religion.

It is secular in its spirit. The ideals of moral life that are enshrined in Thirukkural, persuades people to cultivate cordial relationship with all other human beings.

We can cite a number of couplets from the chapters on Friendship, Evil-Friendship and False – Friendship.

-Dr. A.N. Perumal

Book of Egalitarianism

What kind of state was it that gave Thiruvalluvar, with the catholicity and universal outlook, his philosophy and inspiration? Between the third and the first century B.C., dynasties of the Chera, Chola and Pandya kings

ruled over the different parts of Tamilnadu, having wide international contacts with countries like Rome, Greece, Egypt, Malaysia and China.

Valluvar had a wider vision of the world. In order to alleviate the miseries of mankind. Valluvar composed this Universal Book of Egalitarianism, with pragmatic suggestions as panacea to the sorrows and sufferings of the human race.

-C.Kuppusami

Wisdom

i) Literature of Wisdom

The title of his book Thirukkural, literally means 'Book of Sacred Couplets". In this context, 'Sacred' is not to be understood as 'religious', since 'tiru' also means 'beautiful and elegant'.

This book occupies in the literature of the world, a place comparable to Confucian Analects, Plato's Dialogues, Aristotle's Ethics and Seneca's writings ... The Thirukkural belongs to the great books of the world, and it is the Tamil's contribution to the Wisdom Literature of the World.

-E.V.Singhan

ii) Wisdom of India

The contents of the work represent the general aphoristic wisdom of India and do not belong to any particular section.

-Dr. J. Murdoch

iii) Touchstone of Tamil Wisdom

Thiruvalluvar, the Divine poet of Tamilnadu has called for surrender at the feet of the Supreme Being,

who is the embodiment of eight qualities, since he believes in the existence of God, while giving him various attributes.

There is no treatise superior to Thirukkural. Hence, it is necessary to be cautious about of all statements that are contradictory to the Sacred Kural, which may be conveyed by any people whoever they may be.

- Maraimalai Adigal

iv) Peerless Pearls of Tamil Wisdom

Limpid style with vibrant expression in Tamil,
Delicious whenever we taste it,
Pleasant it is to contemplate on the lofty ideals,
That radiate with the splendour, of Virtue, Polity and Love!
That is the work of Thiruvalluvar;
The world has achieved greatness by the birth of Valluvar, the saviour of mankind.

To give a new orientation to the culture of Tamils.

Valluvar dived deep into the ocean of Tamil wisdom.

Brought the peerless pearls of one thousand three hundred and thirty to the shore.

Adorned and adored the Virgin Mother – the Tamil Muse, with great vigour and devotion to her.

-Paventhar Bharathidasan

v) Quintessence of Wisdom

Thirukkural is perhaps the most outstanding Tamil work to be translated into many Indian as well as foreign languages.

It is known as the 'Tamil Veda'. Thirukkural presents the distilled wisdom of a culture. The overall theme is the art of living. The stanzas are musings on man's behaviour by Thiruvalluvar, a saintly householder, who flourished between the first and the third century. B.C.

As Thirukkural aims at making available the quintessence of the accumulated wisdom of a culture, its author is likely to assimilate freely from all material that is known to him. To see the influence of Jainism, Buddhism, the Smritis, etc., or to trace a Stanza, a line or a half-line to some Sanskrit source would no doubt be an interesting and rewarding exercise, but it can be overdone also.

-Dr. S. K. Chatterji

vi) Practical Wisdom

Thirukkural is the great Tamil master piece of gnomic wisdom. It is impossible to exaggerate the finished literary perfection of the precepts contained in a work which may be regarded as the climax of Tamil literary art. Apart from its literary merits which are unsurpassed, its underlying philosophy combines the attributes of lofty thought and practical wisdom.

The chapters on household life, on self-control, the impermanence of things, on learning, on ministers as the limbs of state, and on the ideals of patriotism as well as on human life and its manifestations are replete with distilled wisdom.

- Dr. C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar

vii) Profound Wisdom

Saint Thiruvalluvar's Tamil classic is full of profound wisdom expressed in simple and lucid verse.

- Jayachamaraja Wadiyar

viii) Nobleness of Sentiment

He (Thiruvalluvar) is one of those seers whose message is intended not merely for their own age or country but for all times and for all mankind. Thiruvalluvar has given to the world a work to which, perfection of form, profundity of thought, nobleness of sentiment and earnestness of moral purpose, very few books outside the grand scriptures of humanity can be compared.

-V.V.S.Aiyar

ix) Unity of Thought and Culture

The Kural as its name indicates is composed in the shortest metre known in Tamil prosody and is a supreme example of brevity and terseness of expression, coupled with depth and wisdom of sentiment.. Apart from its intrinsic merit as a literary production, it is calculated to give our countrymen in the North, as an insight into the unity of thought and culture of Bharat, as reflected by a venerated ancient Tamil classic.

-Justice M.Patanjali Sastri

x) Compressed and Condensed Wisdom

The Thirukkural verses contain wonderful wisdom compressed and condensed in very brief verses. It is

said by a critical admirer that Thiruvalluvar's attempt was like packing the seven oceans within a mustard seed.

-Justice K.S.Ramaswamy Sastri

xi) Crystallization of Ripe Wisdom

What mattered (Thiruvalluvar) was not metaphysics, dogma, creedal adhesions or regular ritualistic practices but rather the reality of everyday life with its constant need for nuances of understanding and behaviour. Thirukkural thus, became the crystallization of ripe wisdom and sage counsel and utilising good sense.

-Dr. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar

xii) Profound Thought on Baffling Problems

The perfection of Tamilian thought and its greatest contribution to world thought on all problems of life is agreed among all thinkers to be Thirukkural. It is universally acclaimed as the greatest Tamil Classic. It has 'two aspects to its greatness – the most profound thought on the most baffling problems of existence and the most astounding economy of words and finish of style.'

-M.Arunachalam

xiii) Inherited Divine Wisdom

Thirukkural is one of the precious assets that we have received from our forefathers. It is one of the pre eminent work of Divine wisdom. It reveals the width of the human heart, the depth of the human thought and the subtleness of human consciousness in a crystal clear way.

Thiruvalluvar, the great sage and seer of Tamilnadu, has painted a picture of an ideal life with great clarity and wider perspective.

-Dr. S.Ramakrishnan

xiv) Proverbial Literature of Wisdom

The Thirukkural is the more distinguished example of proverbial literature in the Tamil language. The Thirukkural is the quintessence of much wisdom which crystallized in the social consciousness of the people to whom the author belonged. The Kural is in form and in substance proverbial and had better be treated on par with the Chinese and Hebrew proverbial literature of ancient times.

-Dr. N.Subramanian

xv) A Pagan's Wisdom

This poem is now well-known to the world on account of the Latin and English translations of European scholars. These scholars, having been mainly Christian ecclesiastics have been attracted by the excellent ethics taught in it in a special kind of short stanza, with very much meaning concentrated in very few words. Father Beschi, the greatest of European Tamil Scholars, is said to have remarked that the tongue of Thiruvalluvar who sang the aphorisms of Kural could not have gone to Hell, even though being Pagan, he must have gone there.

The short verse (Kural) of this poem is a very successful imitation of the Sutra style of Sanskrit writers on Pseudo Scientific subjects; the Kural Venba is superior to the Sutra, because it is in poetry whereas the latter is in prose. The verse is firmly knit and the author, here and there, uses poetic images to relieve the dreariness of direct didactics.

Artists have always refused to admit didactic poetry into the legitimate realms of the Muse, but if excellence of workmanship and the occasional illumination of moral teaching by flashes of true poetic fire can justify the acceptance of any didactic poem as true poetry and the Thirukkural is that poem.

-Prof P.T.Srinivasa Iyengar

xvi) Work of Ancient Indian Wisdom

Valluvar had a great fascination for the eternal truths. His observations on non-violence (*Ahimsa*). Compassion (*Arul-udaimai)*, fellow-feeling (*Oppuravu*) and speaking truth (*Vaymai*) are the quintessence of our ancient Indian Wisdom.

Valluvar's description of **home, the sweet home** and his stress on hospitality reveal the brilliant exposition of the fundamentals of Tamil culture.

-**Namakkal Kavignar V.Ramalingam Pillai**

xvii) Ancient Wisdom of the Tamils

The 'Sacred Kural' have attracted the attention of most of the missionaries who have come over to India in the last three centuries.

The lofty wisdom of Thirukkural has changed their mis-conceptions about the heathens of India.

They have discovered the spirit and magnificent thought of India and made a comparative study of Thirukkural with the Western classics and also with the holy scriptures of India.

Thus, they brought a new awareness among the European and American scholars about the ancient wisdom of the Tamils as well as of the Indian thought.

They have played an important role as pioneers, who opened new vistas in the study of Thirukkural.

-Dr. K.Meenakshisundaram

xviii) Bowl of Wisdom

Thirukkural alone is enough to edify the world. It contains all the aspects of wisdom and there is nothing which it does not contain.

-Naganar

xix) Monument of the World Wisdom

Thiruvalluvar, one of the greatest of Tamil poets and thinkers, who lived somewhere between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D., has given to the world his monumental work, Thirukkural, which is of perennial interest to the nations of the world.

The message of Thiruvalluvar is not pessimistic, but optimistic. He wants us to laugh, even amidst great dangers, for that is the only way to which dangers or sorrows can be overcome.

-Dr. A.Chidambaranatha Chettiar

xx) Poet of Divine Wisdom

Sov'ran Poet of the hoary South
Master Sage of sweet coupleted lore
Teacher Great of Truth and wisdom's store.

O! Nameless Bard whose name is Great and Good.

The bright and precious Jewel of Human life,
The single work, a classic gem of Love.

And wealth and virtue, is unparalleled.

And revered by nations, great and small,
Of diverse faiths and Creeds the wide world o'er

- M.S. Purnalingam Pillai

xxi) Kaleidoscopic Wisdom

In Thirukkural, one can find a kaleidoscopic wisdom that will inspire the people to lead a simple living with high thinking.

-Dr. Avvai D.Natarajan

xxii) Treasure House of Wisdom

The Thirukkural is the greatest treasure-house of wisdom in Tamil, and as the great poet Subramanya Bharathi has said, it is the gift of Tamilnadu to the world.

The Thirukkural is famous for its ethical and political principles of a very high standard and for its noble ideals in treatment of love.

-Dr. M.Varadarajan

Bible of Mankind

The grandeur of a Milton, the grace of a Dante, the universality of a Shakespeare, the sublimity of an Aristotle, the idealism of a Plato and the moral fervour of a Marcus Aurelius are all to be found in a harmonious blending and appropriate proportion in this "Bible of Mankind". This universal character notwithstanding the Kural is the Testament of the Tamils. It has been the fountain of inspiration to generations of geniuses, saints and moralists, statesmen and princes.

-Dr. K.M.Balasubramaniam

Tamil Veda

Indeed, his work (Thirukkural) is eulogised by the Tamil people as the Tamil Veda, the Universal Veda and the later Veda, Divine Book etc. It is a great pity that such a treasure should have confined for so many ages only to one single people even in Hindusthan.

-V.V.S.Aiyar

Gospel of Mankind

Thirukkural is a poetic composition of great antiquity, in the Tamil literature, a classic and treatise par excellence and consequently, it has continued to attract the best minds of the world down the ages. There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom containing the substance of the Five Vedas. **Kural remains the gospel of mankind.** The compositions are sweet to the mind to meditate on, sweet to the ear to hear, sweet to the mouth to repeat. Described as the Veda of the Tamils, it is a book of universal importance and is also hailed as the bible of the Tamilnad. The author sings of virtue, wealth and happiness. The striking feature is its freshness which makes one feel as if it was meant for the present times. Composed by the king of poets, it has not lost its beauty by the lapse of time but has continued to attract the best minds of the world down the ages.

-K. Kamalanathan

Veda of Mankind

Thirukkural, the Tamil Classic is universal in its outlook, which has no barriers of caste, creed, language and country. Hence, it has been acclaimed as the Veda of mankind.

-**N.M.R.Subbaraman**

A work based on the earlier Vedas of the Tamils

The ideas and ideals that are expressed by Valluvar are acceptable by the warring creeds of the world.

Thirukkural has been composed by Valluvar, in order to fill the vacuum created by the disappearance of the earlier Tamil Vedas, which were lost in the limbo of oblivion.

He gave new orientation to the cherished ideals of *Aram, Porul, Inbam* and *Veedu* which are embedded in the earlier scriptures of the Tamil people.

-Prof. K.Subramaniyam

A Guide for the Pilgrimage of Man

Muppal shines as a torch and shows the path of pilgrimage of man in this world. It is a rare and unique treasure to the Tamil people and Tamilnadu, which is not easily accessible to other nations of the world. It has arrested the attention of the great men of the world.

No doubt, a day will come, when the humanity will seek the help of the wisdom that has been embedded in Thirukkural to save the mankind from the disasters and destructions of war.

-Dr. E.Sundaramurthi

A Guide Book

It is the duty of individuals and groups to study this guide book of ethics and honour the author and his work.

-Sardar Ujjal Singh

A Guide

Its (Thirukkural) inimitable terseness, its combination of literary grace and philosophic and psychological subtlety, its gracious and yet penetrating outlook on life's problems, and its intensely practical approach make this series of aphorisms, a source of

delight to the mind and a guide and solace for the soul. The **Thirukkural bears comparison with the highest efforts of the Greeks, the French and the English in the domain of epigrams and maxims and aphorisms of the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhartruhari but in economy of expression allied with profoundity of thought, it is supreme.**

-Dr. C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar

Gospel Composed by a Man

Thirukkural is the priceless treasure of Tamilnadu. It reveals the flowering of the native genius of the Tamil people. Yet, it has been acclaimed as one of the precious riches of the world.

Bhagavad Gita was preached by Lord Krishna and listened by man. Thiruvasagam was sung by a man. In this case, the listener was the God.

But Thirukkural was preached by a man to the mankind. Even that was taught by a great-man, who led a righteous life successfully in this world. So, the ways and means shown by Thiruvalluvar indeed serve as a guide, a virtuous life. There will be no doubt, when we call it a beacon light to the life of man.

- Muttamil Kavalar Dr.K.A.P.Viswanatham

Gospel of Tamils

Thiruvalluvar, - two thousand years before - while, writing his Thirukkural, mentioned God in ten couplets, and in the remaining 1,320 he taught man how to lead his everyday life. The product of the Thirukkural is the 'Canons', - the complete man. Thus, Valluvam, that is leading one's life according to the teachings of Thiruvalluvar, is a true religion. The Thirukkural is the

gospel of this religion, a gospel with a unique difference, for a person belonging to any religion can, without conflict with its creeds and its tenets, accept its teachings.

-G.Vanmikanathan

Ethical Work

Thirukkural is classical among didactic works of the Sangam Age. It is variously dated from 3rd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D. It is considered a work of ethics of par excellence. **If ethics is the Science of Living, then Thirukkural is the undying classic on the subject.**

-Dr. B.Natarajan

Socio-Political Philosophy

The great ethical work of the Tamils is Thirukkural. The title means 'Sacred, short stanza work'. The original name given by the author himself is Muppal, meaning three divisions, i.e., *Aram, Porul* and *Inbam*.

The Thirukkural contains 133 chapters. Each of the chapter consists of ten couplets in poetic form.

This ethical work is not merely a treatise on morals but also it deals with the socio-political philosophy of the ancient Tamils. There are a number of significant features in the second part of Thirukkural, known as *Porutpal*, which excels in its approach, and elucidation of the principles of the state-craft. Though it extols monarchy (Benevolent despotism), it lays stress on the democratic spirit of the ruler and the ruled.

-Dr. T.Murugarathinam

Tamil Marai

Valluvar's vision of a new world is based on casteless and creedless social order has induced the saints and seers and poets and philosophers of Tamil Nadu who belong to different religious creeds throughout the ages to admire and adore the lofty wisdom of Thiruvalluvar without any restraint. So, they have extolled it as Tamil Marai.

- Prof. K.Vellaivarananar

Holy Scripture of Tamils

Thirukkural is the holy scripture of the Tamils. It reveals the mind and thought of the ancient Tamils, who have envisaged a new social order and the brotherhood of man. There is hardly any literary composition, which can be considered as equal to this Marai of the Tamils.

-Siruvai Mohanasundaram

Life in Heaven

Thirukkural transcends the barriers of time and space. The significance of it, lies in this universal perspective.

Kural, not only prescribes the principles of moral life, which will ensure happiness in this world, but it also directs to secure the life in Heaven; because of the divine traits, it has been hailed as the Holy Scripture.

-Molignayiru G.Devaneyap Pavanar

Universal Outlook

It has been a well known fact that Thirukkural has secured an unique place in the domain of World

Literature. Kural has been acclaimed as great as the ethical and religious scriptures of the world such as Bhagavad Gita and the Holy Bible. It has been said that the work of Valluvar excels in its lofty ideals and in the direct appeal to the human heart. The universal outlook of Thirukkural and its profound wisdom of pragmatic moral ideals have enhanced the greatness of this work and have placed it in the forefront of the holy scriptures of the world.

-Dr. V.I. Subramaniyam

Finest Specimen of Didactic Literature

Thirukkural is considered as one of the finest specimen of didactic literature in Tamil. It has become a guide to the everyday life of the people. The maxims of Valluvar, though composed twenty decades ago appear more modern in several aspects of human life.

The spirit of modernism had attracted the attention of the scholars and savants of the globe.

-Vageesa Kalanidhi, K.V.Jagannathan

Four in Three (Virtue, Wealth, Pleasure and *Bliss*)

I) The Kural is one of the didactic poems of India. The treatment of *Muppal* or the Trivarga of Dharma, Artha and Kama, the sage wisely leaving the consideration of the fourth varga of the Caturvarga; viz., Moksha, to the individuals according to the way in which they reacted towards the unseen reality.

-Dr. S. K. Chatterji

II) Thirukkural occupies a place of pride in Tamil Literature. It is venerated by the Tamils in much the

same way as the Vedas and the Gita, the Sanskrit works. Hence the appellation Tamil Veda by which this supreme work is referred to. Three of the four purusharthas that mankind should strive for viz. Dharma, Artha and Kama are dealt with at great length in this work under the names *Arathupal, Porutpal* and *Kamathupal* respectively. The fourth Purushartha viz. Moksha has not been treated separately. It may be because at the beginning of Arathupal, Moksha is dealt within an allusive and indirect way. To him he who follows the principles of righteousness and wherely he earns his living and gets his legitimate desires fulfilled. Salvation is assured. Where then, is the need for a separate treatment of the Subject? This may be another reason.

-S.N.Srirama Desikan

III) "This **(Chapter on Renunciation)** should form the fourth book of this work, since it was the design of the Author to include in his poem the four most esteemed things *Aram, Porul, Inbam* and *Veedu*. But he has not assigned to *Veedu* a separate book, because (1) it is very brief being only three chapters; and 2)it really belongs to the first book, since only by virtues can 'emancipation' be sought. Of these 'Renunciation' is the first."

- Fr.Beschi

Cream of Religious Ideals

Thirukkural, which has been composed by Valluvar, deserves to be called a Holy Scripture. It appears to be a religious scripture. It expresses in unmistakable terms the cream of religious ideals in a nut-shell.

Thirukkural believes in the existence of the Supreme Being, ie., the God. It describes Him as the embodiment of perfection in the taints and qualities of divinity.

But in order to induce the people to free themselves from the cycle of births and deaths, he advises them to seek refuge at the feet of the Lord.

-Tavathiru Kunrakkudi Adigalar

Pothu Marai

We very often use the term Tamilmarai (Holy Scripture of the Tamils), to refer to Thirukkural. But this usage seems to be a good old one. In the middle of the first millennium A.D. the poets of Tamilagam called it Tamil Veda. But, the Veda in Sanskrit was not allowed to be studied and recited by the non-Aryan or Dravidian people. It was mainly intended for the higher castes in the Varnasrama social order.

But Thirukkural in Tamil is quite different from those renowned Vedas.

Thirukkural preaches the lofty ideals required for the virtuous life of man in general. It is not a closed book to any caste or community.

Since, it has been written in Tamilnadu, people of various sects and castes have been allowed to study, it has been acclaimed as Tamilmarai.

It is also called Pothu Marai, i.e., Common Scripture, because it transcends all barriers of caste and community, as well as space and time.

No other work in world literature deserves to be called as *Pothu Marai* except Thirukkural written in the Tamil language.

-Prof. K.P.Rathinam

Freshness of Outlook

"Kural is rightly called the Tamil Veda : it is a poetic composition of great authority on the art of living. The

author, Thiruvalluvar, examines the intricacies of human nature with deep insight, consummate skill and robust common sense. There is also freshness of outlook which makes Kural a precious book for all time."

-Shriman Narayan

Universal Scripture

The 'Sacred Thirukkural' of Thiruvalluvar is acclaimed as a Universal Scripture. The aphorisms of Thirukkural are applicable to the people of the world without any reservation. In this respect, it shines as a unique work of world literature.

- K.Rajaram

Holy Thirukkural

The teachings are eternal inspiration and guide to Tamilians.

-A.Ramaswami Mudaliar

All that is Best in the Poems

In Saint Thiruvalluvar's sacred book, the Thirukkural, one can find all that is best in the poems of the work; and this single work will certainly raise the Tamil Literature in the esteem of all literature loving nations.

-Dr. V.S.Chengalvaraya Pillai

Sacred Scripture

The work itself has been the subject of reverent study ever since its appearance. People of all ages, from children to old men, of all sorts and conditions, and of all religious persuasions have been devoutly studying this work, that followers of every religion began

to claim Thiruvalluvar as their own. In short, he became a universal poet and his work became a universal work, appealing to the widest human interests and the simplest human emotions. When law courts were first instituted in our country, judges and lawyers used to cite the Kural as the authority. Like the Bible, it was held sacred and used in administering oaths to witnesses in courts. Even at the present day, it is studied as much as ever and it has been translated into several European languages.

-Prof. S.Vaiyapuri Pillai

Scripture for all Religions

The fact that Tamil classic Thirukkural is claimed by different religious sects indicates its catholicity. Its emphasis on Ahimsa or non-violence in its varied application, ethical, economic and social shows the importance that ancient Tamil culture gave to it. Thirukkural is used by the Buddhists and Jains, Saivites and Vaishnavites. It is called Podumarai or Common Scripture.

-Dr. S.Radhakrishnan

Eclectic Work

The teaching of Thiruvalluvar is however, purely eclectic and inculcates such principles as are common to all systems of morality.

-Dr. R.W.Frazer

Universal Book of Humanity

The six creeds of the days of Kalladanar have since been ramified into six and sixty or more in our

own days and promise to grow veritably into six hundred and sixty six in the future. But like the fixed stars in the distant spaces of the heavens, Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural seems to hold its place unalterably as the Universal Book of Humanity for all ages and climes.

-K.Appadurai

Vision of an Ideal Humanity

One of the earliest sets of moral aphorism exists not in Sanskrit, but in Tamil. It has been called the Tamil Veda, the Kural, the *Muppal*, or the maxims of the poet, Thiruvalluvar (Valluvar, Second Century C.E.) Esteemed by Schweitzer as the "ideal of simple ethical humanity" and as "lofty wisdom", the collection of the Kural sums up the ethical dharma of the classical period of Tamil Literature. It also deals with the practical details of politics and love. Prescriptions under dharma (as righteousness) feature the householder's or mature stage of life, offspring, the husband's primacy, and energetic efforts in the face of Karma (as the law of moral compensation). Injuring others by speech, envy, or fornication is, contrasted with uprightness, forgiveness, ahimsa, (non-violence), and a form of golden rule found in many cultures. "When a man has felt a pain for himself, let him take care that he inflicts it not on others".

-Dr. Roderic Hindery

Cosmopolitan Outlook

Thirukkural is the well known literary composition in the Sangam classics. This work proclaims the basic principles for the moral and material life of the people. The aphorisms about 'loving-kindness' reveal the humane approach of the poet to the problems of life.

The lofty ideals that are enshrined in this didactic work transcend the barriers of race, creed, place and time. Besides, this universal and

cosmopolitan outlook, Thirukkural shines supreme in its poetic excellences.

-Dr. Wilfried Noelle

Classic of a Class

Great men are those who originate great thoughts that shape history. Thiruvalluvar is a great man, not mentioned in history.

In the early stages Thirukkural was an outstanding work of didactic literature, only of Tamilnadu, but later, it became a world classic.

Thirukkural is the greatest piece of didactic literature, ever produced in Tamil and perhaps one of the greatest in any language. Valluvar was a man with a sense of history, and the urge of a present mission, along with a vision of future. Only such a man could have composed these beautiful little couplets, which encompass the wisdom of the world, and of the ages gone by, as well as to come, in thoughts so profound and succinct, words so pregnant with meaning and poetic beauty, so effective, all in two lines! Thirukkural is therefore, truly a world classic.

-S.M.Diaz

Companion to Life

There is no genius as dear to the heart of humanity as Thiruvalluvar, who at the touch of his pen had suddenly turned a dull and melancholy world into a bowl of ambrosia.

The religion of Thiruvalluvar can be said to be the practice of virtue born out of love. Zoroaster, Confucius, Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammed are the venerable founders of various religious creeds of the world. These holy men were born to teach the people of the Universe, the righteous way of living.

Though the fundamental teachings of these religious teachers are universal, yet, they create difference of religious fervour among men. But Thirukkural written over two-thousand years ago is a scripture, the contents of which are universal, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or religion. Hence, this work is a companion and guide to humanity.

-Pandit V.Natesan

Ocean of Righteousness

Valluvam appears as the ocean of righteousness in Tamil. I have dived deep into that sea, to pick up some of the precious pearls that radiate with splendour.

-Dr. K.Mohanarasu

Morals of Great Merit

Thirukkural has been extolled by savants of East, West as a unique guide to universal existence. The Kural of Thiruvalluvar is a poetical work on morals of great merit.

-Rev. Elijah Hoole

Sacred Kural

The sacred Kural, in all its aspects appears to be a Hindu Kural.

-Leo Tolstoy

Charming Effects of Kural

No translation can convey any idea of its charming effect. It is truly an apple of gold in a net-work of silver.

-Dr. Graul

Favourite Work

In its own land, the Kural owes its popularity as much to the beauty of its verification as to its morality,

but it is in its breadth of view and its speaking that to the heart of men, must make it a favourite work with the world at large.

-Dr. R.C. Temple

Ideals of Communism

In fact there is a great deal in the Kural which breaths the spirit of the best in Communism.

-Fr. H.A.Popley

Text Book

Though more than fifteen hundred years old, this rare collection of precepts, conveyed in the style of unequalled poetry, has lost none of its original flavour among the people in one hundred and thirty three chapters. **It treats almost of every variety of subjects pertaining to the relations and duties of life, forming a text-book of indisputable authority.**

-Dr. P.Ward

Conscience in Print

Thirukkural is a detailed and comprehensive book of virtue which guides us, not by laying down the law, but by throwing challenge upon challenge to the conscience of man in the form of its many profoundly appealing observations upon every moral issue. Indeed, it may otherwise be called the printed conscience.

-Brother Lucien

Significance of Kural

Conjoined with these charming, Veda-like praises of sharing one's wealth is an invitation to a sustained

outpouring of one's wider resources, if not one's very self. Behold the men that alter not in their affection for their old friends; even enemies will look upon them with tenderness.

In contrast to the Kural's specific ethical norms, other portraits of moral instruction were concealed in only the lightest shades, two of which were Vatsyayana's Kamasutra and Kautilya's Arthasastra. In his summary and analysis of the former treatise, which deals not with love or friendship in general, but with erotic love in particular, Sushil K.De makes two deductions: 1) the Kamasutra discloses the existence of a floating mass of previous tradition on erotica; 2) it overshadows later imitations.

-Dr. Roderic Hindery

A Treatise on the Art of Living

Thirukkural is a treatise par excellence on the art of living. Thiruvalluvar, the author, diagnoses the intricacies of human nature with such penetrating insight, perfect mastery and consummate skill absorbing the most subtle concepts of love and modern psychology that one is left wondering at his sweep and depth.

-Dr. K.M.Munshi

Fine Products

Scholars well versed in Tolkappiyam and Cankam classics will readily agree to the view that Thirukkural is the fine product of Tamil civilisation and culture whose origin and periodical evolution are still shrouded in mystery.

-Dr. V.Sp. Manickam

Freshness of Kural

They (Kural couplets) are not limited to the people of any one nation, or of any one language or of any one period, but they will remain alive and fresh as long as the human race survives.

-Dr. Ramanial C.Shah

Treasure of the Tamils

Thirukkural was a treasure house of worldly knowledge, ethical guidance and spiritual wisdom. In the majority of its 1330 couplets even where the theme was common place the treatment was artistic and the play of sentiment, image and sound had a perennial interest.

-Dr. Zakir Hussain

Classic of Humanity

One of the most outstanding of the Tamil classics is the Kural. The Kural contains the maxims of the Saint Thiruvalluvar. The message is for all humanity and at no time is such a message more needed than at present. The excellence of this work has been appreciated by great scholars of all lands.

-Dr. A.L.Mudaliar

Relevance to Modern Life

When I read a verse here and there, as I do daily, I am surprised at almost every reading at its freshness and relevance to the problems of our times - for such is the Universality and Humanism.

-Dr. Xavier S.Thani Nayagam

Hand Book for the Human Society

The scholars of the world have praised Thirukkural as the embodiment of the principles to be adhered to by the human society for a calm and happy life. Why

Thiruvalluvar has forgotten to pay homage to the goddess Kalaimagal (Minerva-the Muse of Arts and Learning), while he has paid tributes to Nilamagal - the goddess of Earth, and Tirumagal - the goddess of Wealth (Lakshmi).

-Dr. M.P.Sivagnanam

Sublime Thoughts

Tamil language can take pride in possessing a priceless jewel in the Thirukkural of Thiruvalluvar, a work of all timing and climes. It is common knowledge that Thiruvalluvar deals with such topics as the sublimation of the individual, his education, domestic life, statecraft, etc. **In short it breathes the soul and genius of ancient Tamil culture noted for its catholicity and breadth of outlook. That it is a work of Universal appeal is evident from the fact that it is translated in several languages of the world.**

-Dr. N.D.Sundaravadivelu

Main Source of Tamil Culture

Thirukkural is one of the prime classics that have shaped the culture of the Tamils. It is known as *Muppal*, i.e., a work in three parts. It has captivated the minds and thoughts of the great men of the globe.

From the hoary past, the ideas and ideals and the words and wisdom of Thirukkural have been extolled and practised by the people of Tamilnadu with great respect and reverence.

-Dr. R. P.Sethu Pillai

Code of Morals in Poetical Aphorisms

The most popular of these poems which has exercised the greatest influence on succeeding generations is the Muppal or Kural composed by Valluvar.

The Muppal consists, as implied by its name, of three parts which has treated of virtue, wealth and love. It was a code of morals expressed in poetical aphorisms. **The author appears to have been a free thinker and held that true wisdom is the science of happiness. His fame as the author of the Kural or Muppal will last as long as Tamil is a living language.**

-V.Kanakasabhai Pillai

Greatness of Thirukkural

The Thirukkural is the Sacred Book of the Tamil nation, cherished by one and all of them whatever may be their individual faith. It is a text-book of morals, politics and love, and reflects ancient Tamil culture as no other work does. The author Thiruvalluvar was a Tamil saint who graced the earth about two thousand years ago. His work has been translated into more than a dozen foreign languages and certainly deserves to become as popular among the Tamils young and old as the Bhagavad Gita among the Sanskrit loving people of India.

-Prof. S.Anavarata Vinayakam Pillai

Unique Work of the Genius of the Tamils

Thirukkural is a unique creation of the Tamil genius. Its message is universally recognised today as a great importance. A clear appreciation of the ideas underlying to the message of Thirukkural most necessarily lead us to understand the cultural background in which it arose.

-Rao Bhadur A.Chakravarti

Intellectual Wealth of the Tamils

Thirukkural is a supreme and priceless wealth that has been left to the posterity by the ancient Tamil people. The scholars of the Orient and Occident have reverence

for this masterpiece of Tamil literature. **It is well known for its universal outlook as it has appeal beyond the barriers of races, religions, creeds and languages. So, there is no surprise when the humanity extolls it as Universal Book of Ethics.**

-Thirukkuralar V.Munisamy

A Philosophical Treatise

This ancient Tamil classic does not insist upon the Don'ts (i.e., to be avoided). But with great care and consideration, it expresses the basic norms of moral philosophy. Hence, this work can be treated as a philosophical treatise. Thirukkural informs every human being, to select the ideals and maxims of moral life that are suitable to them and instructs them to lead a virtuous life in accordance with their selection of maxims by giving priority to them.

-Mahavidwan S.Dandapani Desigar

Message of Thirukkural

Thirukkural is better known to the world abroad, than the languages and the land of its birth, albeit in a manner confined to a limited circle of intellectuals all over the world. Despite the inadequacies and imperfections of many of its foreign translations, the all-conquering universality of its appeal is, that it has permeated every land and every age, every tongue and every creed, and has won unstinting tributes from even those whose knowledge of the Tamil language, literature or culture is otherwise negligible.

If these claims are correct, it follows that the Kural is not a mere ethics, not a mere philosophy, but a full-fledged religious philosophy that has a unique message to mankind covering all the requirements of man.

- K. Appadurai

Thiruvalluvar's Contribution

"Though Thiruvalluvar lived about 2000 years ago, it does not seem he is dead. He is a contemporaneous presence in the Tamil country, influencing men's thoughts and urging them to bring their conduct into greater and greater conformity with the high ideals, he set before them."

"None could disagree that he has shaped Tamil literature as no other Tamil poet has done. He has dominated the intellectual and literary landscape of Tamilnadu, and never, since his time has any man risen to the moral and spiritual height, that came to him. There was no one like him before or since, except, perhaps, Kambar."

"He came to think surely, of mankind as including persons, who spoke other languages than Tamil. He taught in the same language as Plato or Aristotle, Confucius or Rousseau did in respect of ideas, in respect of conceptions of right and justice. What did he think of mankind and what does it matter what he thought of mankind? It matters because therein resides the quintessence for prosperity and peace in the social order, a quest which still eludes us if he was right, the rest of us were wrong.

-Justice S. Maharajan

Message of Thiruvalluvar

The idea of active love did arise in the popular ethics of India in fairly ancient times. We know from many stories we meet in her literature and especially through the ethical maxims found in the Kural, a work which probably belongs to the second century A.D.

Kural means short strophe. The work is written in the Tamil Language. In the Kural, world life-negation

is only like a distant cloud in the sky. In 250 maxims they form the concluding part of the world earthly love is lauded. Later times, because 'they cause offence, interpret them allegorically as concerning the love of the soul to God.

In the ethics of the Kural, as in those of the Laws of Manu, the idea of reward has a place. The way of virtue is recommended because it leads to a better reincarnation or to liberation from re-birth.

Maxims about joy in activity, such as one would not expect from the Indian lips, bear witness to the strength of the world and life affirmation present in the Kural.

Like the Buddha and the Bhagavad Gita the Kural desires inner freedom from the world and a mind free from hatred. Like them it stands for the commandment not to kill and not to damage. It has appropriated all the valuable ethical results of the thought of world and life negation. But in addition to this ethic of inwardness, there appears in the Kural the living ethic of love.

With sure stroke, the Kural draws the ideal of simple ethical humanity. On the most varied questions concerning the conduct of man to the world its utterances are characterized by nobility and good sense.

-Dr. Albert Schweitzer

Work of Universal Appeal

Thiruvalluvar has given expression to thoughts and feelings which are applicable to all countries at all times. Hence, it has and will always have universal appeal.

Thirukkural is free from narrow sectarianism. It can be accepted by all religions. It contains moral ideals

which are means for all people irrespective of caste, creed or profession.

-Dr. R.Sarangapani

Free from the Sanskrit Influence

Almost free from the influence of Sanskrit, the Kural shows the richness and power of the Tamil language.

-J.M.Nallasami Pillai

Supremacy of Thirukkural

Thiruvalluvar's work in its essence generally, and more particularly in the First Book on Arathupal, is a comprehensive treatise on the art of well-harmonised living. Naturally, the fundamental basis of the treatment is a balance between the Hindu religious tenets as digested and laid down in the Bhagawad Gita and the Tamil way of life with a preponderance of vigorous rationality. The influence of other religious and ethical thinking from outside Tamilnadu and India could also be traced in the work, which, however, is a happily integrated whole and not a patch work. It is a unique synthesis between the ideas of affirmation and negativism in life. It was too, a timely call to the Tamil people to return to their realistic values of the Sangam age that was ending, while absorbing the good aspects of the other ways of life that had come into Tamilnadu from outside, by about the time of Valluvar.

-S.M.Diaz

Great work

It is one of the works which we ought to read, re-read and make it a part and parcel of ourselves. Our country will greatly benefit by a true and proper study of this great work.

-Rao Bahadur, T.M.Narayanaswamy Pillai

Theosophical work

The modern reader will find in this classical poem (Thirukkural) much food for thought, reflection and action. The theosophist will discover poet's theosophy in study. In it, God is personal and impersonal and Truth. The moralist will be satisfied with his precepts and maxims on hate and the evil–doer.

-Prof. M.S.Purnalingam Pillai

Pride of South India

The Thirukkural of Thiruvalluvar is the pride of South India. What the Bhagavad Gita is to the Sanskritists, the Thirukkural is to the lovers of Tamil. In this book, Thiruvalluvar treats *Muppal*, or Trivarga (Dharma, Artha and Kama). He has divided his book into three parts, the first dealing with *Aram*, the second with *Porul* and the last with *Kama*. This Tamil classic deals in extensive width the moral values of life which foster neighbourliness and love among all men and women to whatever race or community they may belong.

-Prof. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar

Lovely Monument

The Pyramid of Cheops in far-away Egypt is over five thousand years old. As it rose proudly in a land fertile of vegetation, among the people whose civilisation was the glory of the world, it was as wonderful then as now, though its meaning was perhaps more understood in that age than in our own. And it is wonderful today, since time, with all the changes of civilisation and the influx of new people and new languages has yet left its glory undiminished.

The Qutub Minar on the plains of Delhi stands as tall and stately today as it did seven hundred and fifty years ago, when it was first built. Time has not rusted it.

But they are of dull stone and dead metal, and were the work of the toiling poor, whipped to their labour by the stinging lash and the angry choleric world. Pride of power and an abounding vanity were their motives.

And they are evanescent; for time is inexorable and its ravages are sure. Of the great Pyramid there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down and it shall surely crumble and fall to pieces; 'beauty passes, beauty vanishes'. The Kutub Minar too will go the way of all dust.

The Kural of Thiruvalluvar is a far greater and lovelier thing than these; fashioned as it was, in the flowering time of an ancient civilisation, as the result of many cultures. Its material is living speech strong, simple and marvellously accurate; the work of one man, a work of love, the bodying forth of an inner purity and refinement. Therefore, it stands today a new and gracious miracle, as even though the acts of literary vandals who have left their mark even on the best literature are sometimes plainly noticeable and in places just not so obvious, but never in such measure as to detract from its charm or impair its truth and beauty. **At once sober and magnificent, stern and kind, and didactic, stimulating, humorous, lofty by turns, there still remains in every part the divine spark of thought and of form the creative touch of reason as well as of poetry.**

And it is permanent and enduring. It will live as long as Tamil, or any human language may live; now that all men know of its worthiness we may reckon that its wisdom will be preserved in a hundred languages, and cherished like 'jewel that cannot be taken away'.

Is it any wonder? Then that the author is regarded as a saint even in the land of his birth.

- P.N. Appuswamy

Mount Everest of the Tamil Thought

If the Tamil Classics are the Himalayas of human thoughts, the Thirukkural is the Mount Everest soaring above the Himalayas themselves. The Thirukkural is the highest expression of the **Triad or the Tetrad**, which is to be appreciated for what it is in the original should be seen with a truly Tamil eye and not with the borrowed vision of the medieval **Sankritist** eyes.

It (Thirukkural) is a homogeneous work, a Bible of Humanity and Human life indivisible.

- K.Appadurai

Temporal and Mundane Thoughts

Kural is basically temporal and mundane in content should not be confused with agnosticism or deism. The fact that Valluvar opens his account with an invocation to God Almighty; that he allots a separate chapter to ascetic virtues and his deterministic view of Destiny should suffice to convince us that he was an ardent theist. But what distinguishes him from all other sages of his time and after his practical outlook of life on earth, "Have faith in God, but wait for the green light before crossing the street", - is the kind of advice typical of him.

Dr. B.Natarajan

Glory of the Tamils

Thiruvalluvar is the doyen among the Cankam poets. He is the chief glory of ancient Tamilakam. He is a revolutionary thinker. **Rationalism and objectivity mark his process of thinking. He has minutely observed this world from all angles. He has put before the world a policy and a plan surcharged with pragmatism. He has given out a moral code**

for the whole of humanity, irrespective of colour, creed, and community and has set forth the way for good life from the world's point of view, unbiased by any narrow sectarian prejudices.

-Dr. N.Baluswamy

Positive Injunctions

Thirukkural is often considered a mottled collection of pithy, yet lofty ethical maxims of an ancient idealistic moral philosopher. Such literature is not rare in the history of ancient times, eg., the Proverbs of the Bible, where in sometimes, the first line in the couplet expresses a general proposition and the second its particular application. These may either exhort the reader to positive good actions or warn him against evil one, eg., In Ten Commandments, only two fourth and fifth-keeping the Sabbath and honouring the parents are positive. In Thirukkural, positive injunctions of the ch.8 on love, ch.9 on hospitality and 11 on gratitude and the prohibition against lasciviousness of ch. 92, drunkenness ch.93 and gambling ch.94 are very well-known.

-V.D.Sahayam

Completely Non-Denominational

Thirukkural is essentially a book on ethical philosophy. It portrays a way of life and it lays down a code of conduct. The author's beliefs are simply stated; he believes in God. The first ten verses are in praise of God. But he does not call God by name so that he can be identified with one religion or another. He refers to him as the wise One, the Incomparable One, and as the Sage of

the Sea of virtue. He is completely non-denominational. He also seems to believe in rebirth. Often, he refers to 'seven births' or 'countless births'.

-Swami Sivanandha

Maxims of Modernity

The principles of moral life and the political economy enunciated in the Thirukkural will be suitable for all time to come. At the same time, it appears more modern in its lofty ideals.

Kural excels in its treatment and approach to solve the various problems of human life and state-craft.

-Dr. S.Ilakkuvanar

Gospel of Action

Those basic aspects could be summed up in the briefest expression as the performance of one's Duty with Dignity and Discipline. This gospel of action, which ensures not only the progress and welfare of individual life, more so of the people became the turning theme of the masses, particularly in Tamilnadu in the 20th century.

-Dr. M.Muthuraman

Rudiments of Rationalism

Saint Thiruvalluvar was no orthodox religionist but believer in the maker of the world, for whom he had no particular name, though he described him as *Vahuttan* he was free from sectarianism and as his poem makes an universal appeal to humanity and application to life in general. So the interpretation of his poem must be more rationalistic and broad minded than Sectarian.

-Prof. M.S.Purnalingam Pillai

Universalism of Thirukkural

The illustrious Thirukkural of Thiruvalluvar is easily the best read Tamil work among the Tamils themselves. It also happens to be the best known and the most oft-translated Tamil work in various other languages of India and the world. So far as we know, it has kept up this place of honour all along the history of the Tamils. For there is not a single literary work in Tamil from the days of the Tolkappiam and the Sangam classics to the national poems of Bharati and Bharatidasn of our own day that has not paid its tribute to Thiruvalluvar either by direct praise or by quoting from him or by using his own characteristic words phrases or ideas amidst their own as a mark of their appreciation of his inimitable splendour.

- K.Appadurai

Illumined Thought

It was Bernard Shaw who said that his role as a social philosopher was to chasten morals by means of ridicule. Thiruvalluvar also uses ridicule as a means of chastening morals. Talking of a man who covets another's wife, he says:

Among those who deviate from virtue, no sinner Is so silly as the one lurking at another's door. (Kural 142)

Many of his sublime thoughts are illuminated with unusual flashes of wit and humour. Talking of those who only pretend friendship with ulterior motives, he says:

Friendship of those who pretend to be one's kin Is fickle like the mind of a wanton woman. (Kural 822)

- Kasthuri Srinivasan

Significance of Thirukkural

People who have studied the Thirukkural of Thiruvalluvar and have understood it without the slightest doubt about its comprehensiveness never think about Manu Dharma Sastra, which preaches justice in a discriminating way between its discriminating communities.

-Prof. P.Sundaram Pillai

Love Living Beings

The teachings of Thiruvalluvar even today appear most modern in spirit. Non-killing and abstinence from eating the flesh of birds and animals are the two important concepts, which Thiruvalluvar has emphasised as among the most important virtues that have to be practised by the people. I believe those who practise these two virtues will be the fitting persons to speak and write Thiruvalluvar.

-Dr. M.Durai Rangasamy

Classic of Non-Violence

The book Thirukkural, which was composed about the first century B.C., is an exposition of the fundamental principles of Jainism.

The Tamil culture portrayed in Thirukkural jealously guarded these two principles - the non-violent dharma as the basis of life, and the casteless society, as the foundation of the socio-economic structure.

-Rao Sahib. A.Chakravarti

Law of life

The leading work is the Thirukkual (Kural) by Thiruvalluvar. This contains 1330 couplets, each a *Kural*

venba of two lines, the second being shorter than the first, grouped into 133 Decads (Sections), the whole being divided into 3 parts. (1) The law of life (*Aram*-Dharma of the house-holder and the ascetic). (2) Social and Political economy (*Porul*-Artha) and (3) Love (*Inbam*-Kama). The work is rightly acclaimed as a world-classic. (It has been translated into many languages, and new translations are still being made). **It incorporates principles of universal appeal independent of all warring creeds, and embodies great wisdom. Subtle humour, apt imagery, racy to the soil, forcefulness, restraint and dignity, add to its poetic charm.** The old conventions about the treatment of the love themes are handled in a refined way, purged of all grossness. There are many commentaries; the most famous being that of Parimelazhagar. Commentaries from modern angles continue to be written.

About the life of the great poet who was perhaps even greater as a man, little is known definitely, apart from legends. The general belief is that he hailed from Mylapore-Madras and was immediately before the Christian era, ie., about 2000 years ago.

-R.Rangachari

Mystic Approach

Valluvar, the philosopher-poet of Tamilnadu, has thrown a flood-of light on the intricate problems of life. He was not only a moral philosopher, but also a great mystic-poet who had contemplated a new system of thinking in the philosophical speculations of the ancient Tamils.

Thirukkural deserves in all its aspects as a wonderful literature that has enunciated to ethos

of human life which never fail to have a fresh impact on our democratic social order.

-Prof. A.S.Gnanasambandan

Philosophy of Life

The appeal of Kural, is timeless, unaffected by several changes, undisturbed by political upheavals, and unsullied by narrow prejudices. Its philosophy has become part of the philosophy of life of Tamilnadu.

-Dr. S.P.Adinarayan

Earliest Ethical Literature

Thirukkural, one of the ancient Tamil classics, is the earliest ethical literature of the mankind. It lays stress on the earthly-life, based on righteousness, which would ultimately lead to the self-realisation.

-G.Varadarajan

Rudiments Saiva Siddhantha

Thirukkural expounds the basic principles of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy.

The self-realisation of man i.e., the attainment of Bliss, has been allegorically portrayed as seeking refuge at the lotus feet of God. This has been called Adi ser Gnanam in Saiva Siddhanta.

Another important doctrine of Saiva Siddhanta is that the world is not created by God. God, soul, and world have evolved themselves without a creator. **The primordial energy had its own evolution, which resulted in the origin of the three eternal objects, i.e., God, soul and the world.**

This basic tenet of Saiva Siddhanta has been clearly expressed in the first Kural Venba itself. Valluvar states

that God is the first among the Three Categories of primordial energy by the term ***mutala,*** i.e., the first. Nowhere he expresses that God as creator (the world), the later-idea of Hinduism.

-N.R.Mujrugave

Pacifism

That one basic idea in him is, a blanket of pacifism thrown over a stable, ordered society, in which the very pacifism will preserve order.

-Dr. N.Subramanian

Catholic Spirit

Among the precious classics of the world literature the Kural takes a place in the front rank.....

Thiruvalluvar was one of those rare and great men whose catholic spirit rose above all denominations and whose vision was not clouded by dogma or prejudice of any kind. His teachings elude classification on any denominational basis.

-C. Rajagopalachari

Praised Through All the Ages

No author is as great as Thiruvalluvar in Tamil and his work has the unique privilege of being praised through all the ages and in almost all the countries of the world, by all conflicting religios and philosophies.

-Dr.T.P. Meenakshisundaram

Superior to the Institutes of Manu

"Thirukkural is superior to the Institutes of Manu and is worthy of the divine Plato himself."

-Rev. H. Bower

A Work on Rationalism

Thiruvalluvar was a Rationalist of the first order. He was a pioneer in condemning the menace of Hindu imperialism in Tamilnadu. So Thirukkural can be claimed as a work on Rationalism.

-Pulavar Kuzhanthai

Finest Flower

Kamban's praise of Tamil, as 'Ever-living(eternal) Tamil is more appropriate only to the case of Thirukkural. It is the finest flower that has blossomed in the garden of Tamil culture which will never become a faded flower that will lose its fragrance and brightness in the ravages of time and clime.

-Dr. M.Govindasami

Ten Commandments of the Tamils

The Kural's sentences are as binding as the Ten Commandments on the Jews. Kural is as important and influential on the Tamil mind as Dante's great work on the language and thought of Italy.

-Charles E.Gover

Though Thirukkural is written by a Tamil in Tamil Language, in Tamil Country, no mention of its language, country, or people by name is ever mentioned in any of the 1330 couplets. It is aimed at the entire humanity without boxing it in time, space or a society.

It addresses the man as an individual as to how he should conduct his personal and family life virtuously, participate in the society that he is part of thus bringing the Kingdom of heaven here and now in the space of 1330 couplets.

- Alagappa Rammohan

The Thirukkural occupies in the literature of the world a place comparable to the Confucian analects, Plato's dialogues, Aristotle's ethics and Seneca's writings.

- Prof. Xavier S. Thani Nayagam

Deeper emotions

The most interesting characteristic of the Kural-love songs is the independence of the body of a person. Heart, face, soul, eyes, hands, forehead, or even the pallid complexion of the face shows their character uncontrollable by the person himself. Such an expression rouses deeper and deeper emotions. Towards the end of the Kural love songs, we can see a vivid love quarrel between husband and wife caused by the sneeze of the husband. This description is so fresh and animated that I feel as if I were watching a home drama on T.V.

The Kural is the core of the spirit of the Tamil people. And the most remarkable point is that it is threaded through with "Love to the others."

-Shuzo Matsunaga

Third, the quality of classical Tamil literature is such that it is fit to stand beside the great literatures of Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Chinese, Persian and Arabic. The subtlety and profundity of its works, their varied scope (Tamil is the only premodern Indian literature to treat the subaltern extensively), and their universality qualify Tamil to stand as one of the great classical traditions and literatures of the world. Everyone knows the *Tirukkural,* one of the world's greatest works on ethics; but this is merely one of a myriad of major and extremely varied works that comprise the Tamil classical tradition. **There is not a facet of human existence that is not explored and illuminated by this great literature.**

-Dr. George L. Hart

III. THIRUVALLUVAR

He talks about worship, but nothing about the way of worship.

He refers to God or an 'Ultimate Reality', but refrains from calling Him by any name.

He talks about the value of reading and reciting scriptures, but never names them.

He emphasizes the values of 'charity' but never lays down the rules.

He repeatedly speaks about the importance of 'learning', but never says what is to be learnt!

He refers to the taxation in governance and not about proportion of collection.

He talks about land, village and country, but does not refer them by any name.

There are couplets referring to Kings and Ministers but none of them contain any reference to particular King or Kingdom. Even the very word 'Tamil' itself is missing from the text.

-Dr. Wilfred Noelle

Life of Universal Brotherhood

Those who study Thirukkural with a discerning mind, will definitely imbued with the spirit of self-respect.

It teaches the principles of political science as well as polity, social awareness and the economic values of life.

The supreme aim of composition of Thirukkural appears to be the instruction of good habits and inculcation of lofty ideals based on pragmatism that will guide the mankind in the right-direction, and teaches the maxims of moral life. Therefore it has been claimed as the only scripture that attracts the attention of all people of the world without any reservations.

It envisages a new social order based on liberty, equality and fraternity and thus it ensures a life of Universal Brotherhood.

-Thanthai Periyar E.V.Ramasami

Greatest Pragmatic Philosopher

The poetic stage of literary development and the pursuit of knowledge ushered into the philosophical period of Tamil literature. Thiruvalluvar, the world renowned Canon (Man of Wisdom) of the Sangam Age, after patiently and persistently contemplating on the various aspects and problems of human life, gave to the world a full-fledged philosophy of life in his famous didactic work. He is pragmatic in his treatment of the problems of life.

This spirit of contemplation and philosophical speculation culminated in the didactic literature of Thiruvalluvar. His masterpiece reveals the loftiest sentiments and the purest philosophy of life in his scripture. In these aspects, he excels Plato and Aristotle, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, Lord Krishna and Manu and Lao-Tse and Confucius.

-Dr. K.D.Thirunavukkarasu

Sage and Saint

Thiruvalluvar is one of the venerated saints of Tamil Nadu. Saint Thiruvalluvar gave us the laws of living a good life, a virtuous life. He describes how to live in the world, so the highest dharma could be fulfilled.

This was Thiruvalluvar's only work, and though it is relatively short, it is sufficient to bring renown to him, making him a venerated sage, and law giver of the Tamil Dravidian people.

- Master Subramanian

Great Synthesizer: Thiruvalluvar

The author of the Kural was a kind, liberal minded man and his poetry is a kind of synthesis of the best moral teachings of his age.

-Fr. Emmons E.White

Philosopher

Thiruvalluvar, a weaver, wrote in the most difficult of Tamil makers, a religious and philosophical work–the Kural- expounding moral and political ideals.

-Dr.Will Durant

The Poetic Mouthpiece

Thiruvalluvar (2nd Century A.D.) was according to a tradition, a weaver living in Southern India. He was the reputed author of the Kural, a collection of 1330 moral maxims written in the Tamil Language. The Kural has been called the Tamil Veda and described as the most venerated and popular books south of the Godavari...the literary treasure, the Poetic Mouthpiece, the highest type of verbal and moral excellence among the Tamil People.

-Fr. H.A. Popley

Friend, Philosopher and Guide

Thiruvalluvar, the author of Kural, addresses neither the King, subject, nor priest, but man. He does not address man either as the law-giver or prophet but as wellwisher, teacher and friend. He neither prophesied nor spoke in hints and riddles; his words contained no shade of doubts, he had full conviction of the truth of what he said, both as an artist and thinker. The Kural of **Thiruvalluvar is rightly considered as Chef D'Oeuvre (Master piece) of both Indian and world literature. This is due not only to the great artistic merits of the work, but also, and this is most important, to the lofty humane ideas permeating in, which are equally precious to the people all over the world, of all periods and countries.**

-Dr. Alexander Pyatigorsky

Cosmopolitan

He (Thiruvalluvar) stands above all races, castes and sects and what he teaches is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder that the Kural has not only been much read, studied and highly praised in the land of its origin for centuries, but has also found many admirers in the West, ever since it has become known.

-Dr. M.Winternitz

A Great Man of Moral Soil

It is refreshing to think that a nation which produced so great a man (Thiruvalluvar) and so unique a work (Kural) cannot be a hopeless, despicable race. The morality he preached could not have grown except on an essentially moral soil.

-Rev. Dr. J.Lazarus

Pre-Sanskrit and Non-Sanskrit Tradition

It is more important that he was also a very integral part of the non-Sanskrit and Pre-Sanskrit Tamil tradition. This fact is seen not only from his conception of 'pleasure' which is so typically a reflexion of the akam genre, but also from the all pervading pragmatic, this – worldly, empirical and to a great extent, humanistic and universalistic character of his particular conception of dharma and justice.

-Kamil Zvelebil

Genius of the World

He was undoubtedly one of the great geniuses of the world; Complete in itself, the sole work of its author (the Kural) has come down the stream of ages, absolutely uninjured, hardly a single various readings of any importance being found. In value it (Kural) outweighs the whole of the remaining Tamil Literature and is one of the selected numbers of great works which have entered into the very soul of a whole people and which can never die.

Sir A. Grant says, "Humility, charity and forgiveness of injuries are not described by Aristotle." Now, these are everywhere forcibly inculcated by this Tamil Moralist.

-Dr. G.U.Pope

A Man of the People

The Kural shows him to be a man of the people. With simple tastes of sturdy honesty, self-reliant, god-fearing and gifted with a sense of humour. He loved the simple home life of the labourer, whether weaver or

tiller of the soil and a home with little children. The greatest virtues in his estimation were simple, kindness, truthfulness, sincerity, and harmlessness to all life. He was not in any sense an ascetic, but a shrewd man of the world. He was a keen observer of nature and of the habits of birds and animals and used simple illustrations with telling effect.

-Fr. H.A.Popley

Wizard

The poet(Thiruvalluvar) in fact, stands above all races, castes and sects inculcating a general human morality and worldly wisdom. Not only the ethical content of the book but skill with which the author gives his aphorisms, a poetical setting in a difficult metre have evoked admiration.

-Dr. A.A.Macdonell

Ministerial Advisor

Thiruvalluvar is the greatest Tamil poet. From his name, he appears to have belonged to a class of ministers, advisors or seers of sacred diviner.

-E.V.Singhan

A Dialectic Thinker

Thiruvalluvar was a dialectic thinker. He presumably sensed the danger in the situation and took upon himself the task of striking a balance between these two extremes of Material and Spiritual.

Morality (Ethics), Artha or *Porul* (Polity), Kama or *Inbam* (Love) and Moksha or *Veedu* (Liberation), he deliberately excludes the fourth objective and confines himself to the first three. He thus sought to present

only the earthly framework of a society – namely ethics, polity and love.

-Shuzo Matsunaga

Legends

The author of the Sacred Kural was Thiruvalluvar, around whom many stories have been woven down the ages. He was an ideal householder. His word was law to his chaste wife, Vasuki. Many Sages were humbled by her, it is said.

-K.C. Kamaliah

Embodiment of Chastity

Thiruvalluvar has become a tradition by himself and various anecdotes and folk stories have gathered around his name. His wife's name is given as Vasuki and she is described as an embodiment of chastity.

-Dr. T.P.Meenakshisundaram

Royal Officer

Valluvar was a term applied to the officers publishing the royal proclamations all around the capital city, riding on the elephants with proclamation drums, as it is made clear in Manimekalai.

-Dr. T.P.Meenakshisundaram

Beauty and Delicacy

The poet has presented his thoughts in verse of extreme beauty and delicacy. The combination of ideas, language and metre is unique. It is impossible to capture the elegance of his style and rhythm in translation. It can at best be a pale reflection of the original.

His teachings have been enshrined in the hearts of the Tamil people for countless generations and they have become a part of their culture and part of their life. They might not always have followed him, but they have always loved, cherished and revered him.

-D.Savariraya Pillai

Pilgrimage Towards Perfection

According to Valluvar's philosophy the human society has now reached a stage of development in its pilgrimage towards perfection and he calls this stage domestic life *Illaram*. In this stage of evolution there is one social order which produces a moral climate. This social order must be maintained by this moral climate is to be there. Only under this moral climate, a man can derive strength to move forward towards perfection that is envisaged in ascetic life *Thuravaram.*

-Rev. J. Lazarus

Poet of mankind

Great thinkers belong to the world. Thiruvalluvar belongs not only to Tamilnadu but also to the whole of India, nay to the whole world. He wrote for the benefit of the whole mankind.

-Sri. Sane Guruji

Creator and Creature of the Times

It is important, however, to note that the close relationship discernible between the ethos of the work of Thirukkural and the ethos of the Cankam classics can be asserted, what is generally conceded in the case of great men of history – that they are both the Creators and also the Creatures of their times – may be said

about Thiruvalluvar in relation to the Cankam Tamil Classics. The latter have full of references to the terms and expressions of Thirukkural. And, the Kural itself reflects the values and ideals cherished in the Cankam period.

-Dr. S.Gopalan

Man of Universal Vision

The picture of Thiruvalluvar that emerges from his work is that of a man of universal vision and understanding but one who defies understanding merely in terms of caste obligations and station in life. It is quite possible that he was a man involved in and committed to action and that he was also a contemplative and one who could identify himself with the 'law' and the poor, one who was not prepared to accord distinction for mere learning unaccompanied by virtue, a citizen who was equally aware of his duties without an undue assertion of his rights, a warm human being sensitive in his personal relationships and above all, a wise man who was not without a word of advice alike to the ascetic and to the lovers.

-Dr. S.Gopalan

Interpersonal Relationships

Thiruvalluvar's mind is so extraordinary that we would feel grateful and thrilled to see human life through his eyes. Valluvar contemplates the grand spectacle of the phenomenon of man in its earthly and cosmic contexts and sees it in all its totality in the clear daylight of unclouded faith. He locates whatever makes for disharmony in interpersonal relationships and maps out a detailed code of conduct which would bring about harmony within the individual and harmony without.

Leaned on his gate he gazes – tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years,
Before him he sees life unroll,
A placid and continuous whole.

-Justice S.Maharajan

Poet of the world

Tamil Nadu had given Valluvar unto the World

And had thereby won great renown!

-Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi

Spirit of Free Enquiry

Over the centuries the ancient culture of the Tamils was subjected to an aggressive impact of other cultures from far and near, with the result a synthetic culture had been evolved, which had come to stay in the country. This was, indeed, inevitable when there was a fusion of races and a mingling of cultures. However, it was given to a Tamil Poet Valluvar to present the lofty heritage of his ancient land in a manner acceptable to men of all ages informed by the spirit of free enquiry. The way of life of the Tamils as enshrined in his immortal work the Kural, is based on the universal truth.

-Justice S. Maharajan

Transforming Passion

Thiruvalluvar, the great sage and seer of Tamilnadu lived in the Pre-Pallavan period (C. 5^{th} Century)

Love in the Kural is an exciting, pervading, transforming passion not a mere cult of body. He shows a keen sensitiveness, to the beauty of a woman as

seen through a lover's eyes and has a gift to make a genuine beauty blossom into fullness.

But the Kural reveals the author, the style in the man.

-H.N.Verma

Eyes that Miss Nothing

Not only does Valluvar see life unroll in a continuous whole but also does he see with the eyes of a Seer what impedes the further evolution of man and how the impediments can be removed. He has eyes that miss nothing, eyes, that can twinkle with humour and wit, sarcasm and mischief, eyes which glow with righteous indignation and sparkle with serene and lofty wisdom, eyes which can make men fidget and women blush, eyes which grow misty with tears for the poor, and sting the wicked.

-Justice S. Maharajan

Glimpse of Real 'Truth'

The sage Thiruvalluvar was a 'rishi' who had the glimpse of real 'truth'. This 'yogin' of Tamilnadu addressed to the whole community of mankind without taking into account the caste, creed, people or belief. The Kural has won appreciation from the scholars and thinkers of various nationalities.

-Dr. Ravindra Kumar Seth

Moral Philosopher

It is the genius of Thiruvalluvar that in his moral code, the ethical principles are enunciated

not as contents of a man's own will or merely as a subjective state of mind but as something that is objective that can be tested with reference to its effect on the society. What will be the effect on others of a particular conduct of an individual? This is the question that had been at the back of the mind of the author when he had enunciated the moral principles. If a man's conduct is in conformity with the happiness of others, then that conduct is moral; if the effect of his conduct is injurious to others, then it is unethical. It is on this basis that the great teacher Thiruvalluvar has laid down his moral precepts in Thirukkural.

-M.Shanmugasubramaniam

Great Moralist

Thiruvalluvar deservedly ranks foremost among the poets and moralists of India; for he has had no superior or equal in either character.

-Simon Casie Chetty

Freshness and Beauty Reign Supreme

Never before, nor since did words of such profound wisdom issue forth from any sage in the Tamil land. Valluvar, the Tamil sage, excels each one of these ancients in his respective sphere. He makes humanity and love the cementing force of society, and considerations of birth are of no account to him. **His political wisdom is characterized by a breadth of vision at once noble and elevating. The sexual love which he**

depicts with inimitable grace and delicacy is idealistic, even if it be schematic and mannered. Its romance is ethereal and carries us to an atmosphere where purity of emotion, freshness and beauty reign supreme.

-Prof. S.Vaiyapuri Pillai

Needs of the Individual and that of the Society

From what has been said above, it is obvious that Thiruvalluvar is one of the greatest social philosophers of the ancient world. He is basically interested in this world and not in the next. His philosophy advocates not only the personal conduct and salvation of the individual but the harmonious development of society. He is interested in the relationship between Man and Man and between Man and Society. He advocates the growth of social relationships and the intellectual, spiritual as well as the material development of individuals and groups. He strikes a balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of society.

-Kasthuri Srinivasan

Product of Indian Culture

Thiruvalluvar was one of the greatest products of Indian Culture. The saint's idealism, his philosophy, humane practical sense and universal ethical code had mingled into the main stream of Indian Culture and had become part of the common cultural heritage and philosophers of India.

-Dr. Zakir Hussain

Greatmen Think Alike

Thiruvalluvar himself was one of these rare great men who had their roots firmly in the history and culture of the Tamils of the Sangam age. Out of the catholicity of his spirit and the depth of his integrated thinking arouse the Kural, the moral line of which is not clouded by dogma or prejudice of any kind. If we see certain likenesses between Valluvar's thought and those of the Buddha, Mahaveera, Plato, Confucious, Kautilya and Vatsyayana, these are only justifiable absorptions by a subsequent thinker of ideas, of which he approves from among those that have preceded him and are available to him, or natural similarities in the working of great minds. But there are also basic differences and substantial originality of thought and expression far ahead of his times, particularly in respect of his treatment of Godliness, casteless society, importance of agriculture, taxation with people's consent and ennobling of physical love. That is the reason why Valluvar's Thirukkural has continued to attract the best minds of the world down the ages. Great Tamil epic writers like Ilangovadigal and Seethalai Sathanar and poets like Alathur Kizhar of Purananuru fame, have quoted him from the 2nd century A.D.

-S.M.Diaz

Masterpiece of Classical Tamil Poetry

Thiruvalluvar, the author of Thirukkural has been claimed by people of many faiths, including the Jains, the Hindus and the Christians. Thirukkural is quoted in early Tamil works such as Purananuru,

Silappatikaram and Manimekalai. Even though there is not sufficient evidence to fix the date of the work precisely, it is generally accepted that it is about 2000 years old. Thirukkural is a masterpiece of classical Tamil poetry and it has something to offer to people of different nations and times.

-Dr. Gift Siromani

Sage of Jainism

The Tamil Jains claim that the author of the Kural was the famous Kundakundaacavya who had epithets, Vakragriva, Elaccarya, and Grdhrapicha and whose original name was Padmanandin.

But he wrote his learned works only in Prakrit and he could not have been the author of this famous work in Tamil. Samaya Divakara, the author of commentary on Nilakesi, cites this frequently as 'em-ottu' that is 'our authority' (eg. 32.6 comm.); but nowhere he ascribed this authoritative work to kundakunda.

-Prof. S.Vaiyapuri Pillai

Valluvar and Great Philosophers

Greece gave birth to Homer and Socrates. The Tamil land gave birth to Thiruvalluvar and Kamban. Kamban is the Homer and Thiruvalluvar is the Socrates of Southern India. The literary glory of the Tamils rests on Thiruvalluvar and Kamban, not to speak of Auvaiyar - the Muse in human embodiment, and a host of others."

-Prof. T.Chelva Kesavaraya Mudaliar

Much Knowledge in Minimum of Words

We may not all be aware even of the name of Sage Thiruvalluvar. North Indian people certainly do not know his name. Few saints have given to the people as much knowledge as he has done in the minimum of words.

-Mahathma Gandhi

Citizen of the World

Valluvar is a cosmopolitan citizen of the world except that he speaks and writes in Tamil.

-J.M. Nallaswamy Pillai

Master of Songs Sublime

I bow to you, Oh Master of song sublime.
Who foremost in creation's dawn did sing
Those songs, that in a changing world still rings
With wisdom rich and rare! The tide of Time
Bears not a richer waftage, than your rhyme
Which fills, pervades man's life, Encompassing
Its wide extent like Vishnu's feet, bearing
Still the unsullied freshness of Earth's Prime.
Your Kural's with the Upanishads stand!
The primal glories of our ancient Land
Pyramids of man's intelligence.
And monuments of his high moral sense!
Relies, should the petty race of man expire,
Of what did once his noblest acts inspire!

-T.B.Krishnaswami Mudaliar

Choice for Mass Communication

The immortality of the work is due to Thiruvalluvar's prophetic exhortations to his people to lead a good life which would exemplify the deepest humanity in them. The very fact that he chose the couplet verse form is interpreted by a scholar as a deliberate choice for mass communication.

He observes: Valluvar was a democrat in thought and form and so was the Kural metre chosen. It was the aptest medium of communication for achievement of the poet's purpose.

-Dr. S.Gopalan

Great Thinker

Thiruvalluvar has been and will continue to be recognised as one of the great thinkers that Tamilagam has produced. And his workThirukkural has been and will continue to receive our utmost consideration, study and thought by all interested in the philosophy, religion and the moral codes practised by Tamilians in ancient days.

-Dr. A.L.Mudaliar

An Idealist

A moralist like Valluvar mentions his idealism in general terms as he does not also create new and 'desirable' institutions; he wishes to reform though occasionally but does not create; **so his treatment of the polity is idealistic and not utopian.** The very wish to reform a system indicates the reformer's

commitment to the system, as Luther's to Christianity and Marx's Secularism. If there is fundamental hostility to the bases of the system, the remedy is not reformation but extermination, of which there is no suggestion in Valluvar.

-N. Subramanian

Matchless as a Work of Synthesis

Valluvar was a sage and seer, a poet and scholar, an idealist. He produced a body of doctrines that is not only matchless as a work of synthesis in the entire world of literature but has also acquired unique in transcending time and space. For the problem he set out to solve are problems eternally recurring life affirmation and life-negation, and the Kural that he produced had to be a philosophy as a way of living and a way of living according to philosophy.

-Dr. B.Natarajan

Valluvar's Wider Vision

A study of his work reveals that he is largely indebted to well-known treatises in Sanskrit such as Manu, Kautilya, Kamandikiya, Ayurvedic treatises and KamaSutra. Kural 41 and 47 emphasizing the importance of the Grahastha (householder) are based upon Kural 58 describing the merits of a married woman who bestows loving care on her husband owes its idea to Manu V-155.

-Dr. S.Gopalan

Reason and Consciousness

Thiruvalluvar may be regarded as an idealist in the sense that he believed that the true or the

real is essentially spiritual and mental in nature. We cannot put any brand to his idealism; once we do so, we are treading on rather a slippery ground. But we may generally say that **he belonged to the school which affirmed that reason and consciousness constituted the essence and complete nature of reality. When Thiruvalluvar seems to convey the impression that he believed in the universality of truth, we are reminded of a Socratic type of idealism.** The method of mutual admiration which Socrates spoke about is nothing but comparison of notes in one's search for truth. Socrates was first among the philosophers who propagated the concept of universals in arriving at which the best method is the method of mutual admiration or examination of view-points with the view to accepting them or rejecting them. From out of this process of search for what is eternal is evolved every one of the universals. Like Socrates, Thiruvalluvar believed in the universality of truth.

-Dr. N.Subbu Reddiar

Egalitarian Society

Although Thiruvalluvar has touched upon every facet of life's problems, his pronouncements in respect of the economy of the nation and its polity in all its aspects are very vivid and marked. There are 125 couplets in Thirukkural that are directly concerned with

economics. A study of these couplets indicates that Thiruvalluvar visualised an egalitarian society. Living as he did in a capitalistic society, he has not allowed the individual to succumb to avarice and greed. To him, means as well as ends should be pure and unquestionable. The trade should, under all circumstances, observe the business etiquette and follow ethical injunctions.

-Prof. M.S.Purnalingam Pillai

Self Realisation

Thiruvalluvar, the earliest and the illustrious social and moral philosopher of Tamilnadu, had a great quest for perfection. In his pursuit for perfection, he has attempted to organise the things of body, mind and soul into a whole. He has interrelated the activity of the human spirit, the artistic and ethical and the religious and rational into a perfect system. By the process of synthesising these three aspects of human endeavour, he has paved the way for the self-realisation of man.

In this aspect, he excels Plato and Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius and Montesque, Rousseau, Russell, Kant and Karl Marx and Buddha and Confucius. His philosophy of life revolves around the 'Radical humanism' of M.N.Roy.

-Dr. K.D.Thirunavukkarasu

Secularism Symbolised

His approach is unique and unlike many teachings that appeared before and after him. For against the background of elaborate religious rituals of the Sangam civilisation, this new teaching ignored, not merely all the divinities and all fear of them and all auguries and beliefs of them, but also all religious institutions and the necessity for them. This teaching has no peg of a deity or God in particular to hang on it. It stands absolutely by itself.

-Prof. G.Venkatachalam

Learning the Contemporary and Presenting the Future

In many respects he (Thiruvalluvar) differs from Kautilya the author of Arthasastra although it is commonly believed and stated that Thiruvalluvar was indebted to Arthasastra in some respects. It does not appear that Thiruvalluvar has based his ideas of Kingship and Government on Kautilya.

-Rao Sahib N. Murugesa Mudaliar

Peak of Human Intelligence

The vision of Valluvar was wider than the earth; higher than the sky and deeper than the ocean. In this respect he excels others, who have devoted their mind and thought in the reconstruction of the social order of the Universe. He visualised a new world which will be conducive to the happy life of the man of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

He appears as a magnificent peak of human intelligence, which has not yet been scaled by any wizard of the world.

-M.A.Manickavelu

Bard of Mankind

After reading Kural, we will realise that Indian culture all over the country is one. The art of this great country is full of the same blood. Great thinkers belong to the world. Thiruvalluvar belongs not only to Tamil Nadu, but to the whole of India, nay, to the whole world. He wrote for the benefit of the whole mankind.

-Sane Guruji

A Beacon Light

He (Thiruvalluvar) shines as a star in the darkness of night, a lovely flower in the desert, a light that drives the gloom of ignorance and a beacon light to the whole world.

-Fr. C.Beschi

Art of Living

The Kural of Valluvar stands an undying beacon light over the arc of time.

As a book of practical guidance to the art of living Kural has few parallels in the literatures of the world.

Kural shows the way to life's poise, depicting its simple graces and innocent pleasures with delicate touches of pleasing poetry and persuasive reasoning.

Its philosophy is perennial
Its coverage in universal
Its wisdom is profound
Its humanism is pervasive
Its brevity is masterly
Its orderliness is amazing
Its poetry is exalting.

It is a book that is opened with expectation and closed with delight and profit and once started the repetition of the exercise is irresistible day after day.

No wonder, scholars of diverse sects and religions, races and languages, have read it with diligence through twenty centuries and have alike acclaimed its universal and timeless approach to life's problems.

-Rao Sahib S.R.V.Arasu

Outstanding of the Tamil Classics

One of the most outstanding of the Tamil classics is the 'Kural'. The 'Kural' contains the maxims of Saint Thiruvalluvar, who is said to have been one of the greatest of poets and philosophers who lived about the first century A.D. The excellence of this work has been

appreciated by great scholars of all lands and the 'Kural' has been translated into many languages, outstanding of which are Latin, German, English and French.

-Dr. A.L.Mudaliar

Veritable Treasure-House

Thiruvalluvar combined the wisdom of a statesman and law-giver with the spiritual vision of a saint. His Kural is a veritable treasure-house of good counsels for the house-holder, and the king as well as the man seeking after beatitude or liberation. Thus it is not only a great book of Indian, but of world literature as well.

- Manmohan Ghosh

Excellent Ethical Work

The author (Valluvar) taught ethical doctrine on singular purity and beauty; which so far as I know, be equalled in the Sanskrit literature of the North.

-Dr. Vincent A.Smith

Beyond the Borders of His Mother Country

Thiruvalluvar's Kural, consisting of 1330 short sentences on the three aims of life - *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, is one of the gems of world literature. Buddhists, Jains, Vaishnavas and Saivas have claimed the poet of the Tamil land as their own. But he belongs to none of them or rather to all of them. For he stands above all races, castes and sects, and what he teaches, is a general human morality and wisdom.

No wonder that the kural has not only become much read, studied and highly praised in the land of its origin for centuries, but has also found many admirers in the west, ever since it has become known.

Sage Thiruvalluvar should not be styled the unknown sage of Mylapore, for he has long been known far beyond the borders of his mother country.

-Dr. M. Winternitz

Aram - Astonishingly Fixed in Tamilnadu

I have greatest interest in the study of Thirukkural. This masterpiece of Tamil and of world literature was very often translated in a number of European languages.

In that famous and admirable book we find at first the *Aram* section, illustrating without any sectarian, religious bias, an ideal of good order of universal human interest... In any case, *Aram* in Thirukkural is the standard Tamil ideal of life, not ignoring various dharmas of Aryan India; but astonishingly fixed in Tamilnadu.

-Dr. Jean Filliozat

Great Literature of the Tamils

Of possibly the same period as the first few books of Sangam are the "Eighteen minor works" largely didactic, these include the well-known collections of aphorisms, Thirukkural, by Thiruvalluvar. This work is highly esteemed by the Tamilians, and there are several translations.

-Dr. John R.Marr

Literary Masterpiece

Tamil is one of the languages very much in use, not only in India but also in other parts of Asia and even Africa. In its literature are many gems of learning and wisdom. The Thirukkural, for example, a Tamil work of the first or second century, has been translated into various languages, and has been studied and praised all over the world. I am happy that this valuable work is being translated into Malay and Chinese.

- Tunku Abdul Rahman

Quoted in all the Best Literature

From the earliest times down to the present day the Kural has been one of the most-quoted literary works of the Tamil land. These vivid couplets lend themselves so aptly to memorisation and quotation, and there is a charm about them that makes us to repeat them again and again. It has already been shown that it is quoted often in the literature produced in the years immediately succeeding the composition of the work, and from that time we find it continually quoted in all the best literature.

-Fr. H.A.Popley

Reflection of Human Thoughts

The Kural is the masterpiece of Tamil literature, one of the highest and purest expressions of human thoughts.

That which, above all, is wonderful in the Kural is the fact that its author addresses himself without

regard to castes, people or beliefs, to the whole community of mankind; the fact that he formulates sovereign morality and absolute reason; that he proclaims in their very essence, in their eternal abstractness, virtue and truth; that he presents, as it were in one group, the highest laws of domestic and social life; that he is equally perfect in thought, in language and in poetry in the austere metaphysical contemplation of the great mysteries of the Divine Nature as in the easy and graceful analysis of the tenderest emotions of the heart.

-Dr. M. Ariel

Inimitable Infinite Variety

As regards the Kural it stands on its merits. The purity of its Tamil, the richness of its diction, the lofty tone of its morality, the theistic and unsectarian nature of its theology the endless variety of topics discussed in its one hundred and thirty three chapters and the profound esteem in which it is held by all classes of Tamil speaking Hindus are too well-known to need praise or comment.

-Dr. Kamil Zvelebil

Emanations of Human Heart

The Kural, one of the great books of the World, one of those singular emanations of human heart and spirit which preaches positive love, forgiveness and peace.

- Dr. Kamil Zvelebil

Expressive Expression

Thiruvalluvar is at his best in his poetic thought, form and diction, so much so, this *Kamattupal* is classic

as one of the lyrical masterpieces of world literature on human love. His verses are considered choicest expression of human thoughts and the noblest of passions of mankind.

-Rao Sahib K.Kothandapani Pillai

Laws and Justice

The legal philosophers of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries realised a close relation between law and justice. The word 'justice' is used here not in the sense of justice dispensed by courts, but in the sense of morals and ethics. In morals, our deductions are with reference to motives of conduct; in law they are with reference to the outward results of conduct. It is common knowledge that the longing for justice is men's eternal longing for happiness. So justice is happiness that man cannot find alone, as an isolated individual, and hence seeks in society. Justice is social happiness. **In Thiruvalluvar's concept of justice is '*Aram*'; it is social virtue, social happiness.** He has used that word in a very broad sense referring to many kind of virtues that promote social happiness. We shall consider 'law and justice' in the light of this view.

-Prof. A.Palaniswami

Thiruvalluvar in fact, stands above all races, caste and sects inculcating a general human morality and worldly wisdom. Not only the ethical content of the book but the skill with which the author gives his aphorisms, a poetical setting in a difficult metre have evoked admiration

- Dr. A. A. Macdonell

IV. CONFLUENCE OF BELIEFS

Thirukkural and Holy Scriptures

The Thirukkural is to the Tamils what the Bible is to the Christians, the Kuran to the Muslims, the Zend Avesta to the Parsis, the Torah to the Jews, and the Granth Sahib to the Sikhs. Therefore, the Tamils have called the Thirukkural, the Tamil Veda.

-G.Vanmikanathan

Thirukkural and Holy Gospels

Thiruvalluvar preached and propagated moral values as the basis of a stable society. His teachings transcend barriers of religion, class, language, time or space. What is marvellous about his writings is the direct appeal to the heart and rational conviction to the mind. In this aspect it excels the holy gospels. If we can practise a fraction what he has left as a glorious legacy, life will be full of meaning and rewarding.

-K.K.Shaw

Kural and the New Testament

In the Kural, there is no teaching, as in the New Testament, concerning a divine community held together by a gap. Nor does it speak about cosmic salvation through a divine and supernatural community. The Kural does not speak about a redeemed and redeeming community which is bound

by love and which redeems the world by a life of *love, of anbu*. Salvation in the Kural is limited to that of individual devotees who are loving and good to one another.

-Dr. Lawrence Gnanadurai

Valluvar and Buddhism

It must be said that there is no evidence to support the suggestion that he borrowed any of his ideas from Christian sources. It is not impossible that the influence of Buddhist and Jain teachings together with his own meditation upon the problems of life, under the inspiration of the spirit of godliness led him to the thoughts and ideals which he has so beautifully expressed in his couplets.

-Rev. H.A.Popley

Kural and Indian Philosophy

The Indian philosophical background against which the Kural could be approached – not merely for the sake of convenience but because of the 'rootedness' of the Kural in Indian Philosophy and Culture-needs some specific reference here. In an important sense, Indian Philosophy itself could be described as a philosophy of values. From the point of view of a social analysis of the Indian philosophical arguments especially, the method of axiological analysis is extremely significant in as much as it has the merit of keeping the track of the metaphysical idea even when the purely ethic-social values are exhorted upon the highest ideal that is accepted in Indian Philosophy referred to as Parama Purushartha, liberation or self-realization (Moksha) is a value to be realized. That is why it is referred to as a value for

man (Purushartha). It is an end (Siddhi) to be achieved (realized) and achieving a Siddhi in the Indian terminology, is possible only through adopting the appropriate means (Sadhanas). In an over simplified way, the Purusarthas (the human aspirations) of dharma (Righteousness), artha (material well-being) and *akam* (pleasure) may be referred to as the sadhanas. **But to Thiruvalluvar, *Aram* is not a means (Sadhana) but an end in itself.**

-Dr. S.Gopalan

Bhagavad Gita and Thirukkural

These two (the Thirukkural and the Bhagavad Gita) precious gems set in the diadem of Indian culture represent the quintessence of the perennial philosophy which is the pride of this ancient land. Great minds, in almost every generation, have drawn inspiration from these two works and have taught them for the benefit of mankind as a whole. **The import and appeal of these texts know no limits set by time and space. The Gita and the Kural are universal scriptures. Good life, dedicated life, life devoted to the pursuit of excellence is what they teach.**

-Dr. T.M.P.Mahadevan

Kural and Gita

Whilst Bhagavad Gita in a forced and chilly manner gives as a motive for remaining in active life that it is in accordance with the order of universe, the Kural justifies it - what an advance-by the idea of ethical activity. Work and profit place a man in a position to do good.

According to the Kural, duty is not contained as in the Bhagavad Gita to what the caste calling involves

but consists in general in 'all that is good'. Maxims about joy in activity such as one would not expect from the Indian lips, bear witness to the strength of the world and life-affirmation are present in the Kural. There hardly exists in the literature of the world, a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom.

-Dr. Albert Schweitzer

Superiority of Thirukkural

The Gita's teachings are possibly valid within the four walls of the Sanatana Dharma the code of Hindu morals. But the same cannot be said of the Kural, for it seems to be meaningful to a wider audience and reveals a mind somewhat displeased with the contemporary order.

-Dr.C.Subramanian

Thirukkural and Agamas

Thirukkural is one of such texts in high Tamil verse. It is an abridged but elaborated version of the first Tantram on virtue called Karana Agama, comprising in all 3000 sacred hymns, called Tirummanthiram. The preface of Tirumanthiram deals with God, Rain, Ascetics, Virtue and the Ruler.

- Sri-La-Sri Somasundara Sri Gnanasambanda Desika Paramacariya Swamikal

Philosopher of Realism and I dealism

Saint Valluvar's approach to moral doctrine is marked by a very thorough knowledge of human psychology and a desire to help imperfect humanity, adhere to the goal of perfection. His general principles hold good for all time and at all places. His prophetic outlook embraced the entire humanity in one sweep, and deduced common minimum moral standard which

every individual should follow, if society were to progress on just lines. Whereas other moralists attempted to reform society as such, Valluvar concentrated on reforming and correcting the individual, so that the emulative effect of the individual's reform may project in the galaxy of ethical poets.

There are ethical poets who soar into rarefied heights of idealism; but they have no roots in the soil, and their dreams are of no great practical value. There are still others who are so obsessed with the demands of realism and practical calculations that their outlook becomes coarse and prosaic, without ennobling touch of ideal vision. Saint Valluvar struck a golden mean between these two, because a poem without an ideal is a corpse adorned and a poem saturated with idealism but devoid of practical value, is only a spirit without a body. In the magic web that Valluvar wove the warp is realism and the weft is idealism.

- M.Bhaktavatsalam

Valluvam and Utilitarianism

In Valluvar's system the three pillars of ethics, polity and love from an integrated structure. One does not run counter to the other. To understand any aspect of Kural, one must necessarily understand and accept his code or ethics of *Aram*. For it is a single current that pervades the entire poem. He sees polity only through an ethical eye. Valluvar gives it (ethics) the pride of place in the introduction *(Payiram)* itself. Ethics of Valluvar is not something demonstrable as for instance in the case of the utilitarian philosophy.

-Prof. V.K.Sivaprakasam

Nationalism and Internationalism

As a Tamil classic of antiquity, Thirukkural while sustaining the glory of Tamil culture, simultaneously

maintains as well as glorifies the spirit of Internationalism.

-Dr. M.Muthuraman

Spiritualism and Materialism

The progressive aspects of a society of nation, by and large, are decided by the moral and spiritual values they profess and practice. That does not mean that there could be no recognition of material values which are certainly for the well-being of the people. Thiruvalluvar recognises the material basis of social and spiritual institutions. However, the sage hastens to add that the material values should be subordinated to the principles of Truth and Goodness. Otherwise, it would lead to materialism, as it has already happened in many parts of the world.

-Dr. M.Muthuraman

World and Life negation are found in the thought of Jesus in so far as he did not assume that the Kingdom of God would be realized in this natural world. He expected that this natural world would very speedily come to an end and be superseded by a super-natural world in which all that is imperfect and evil would be overcome by the power of God". On the contrary, Valluvar believed that in this very natural world, the liberated man can find his heaven and said that perfect bliss could be attained by an individual in this natural world itself and it is unnecessary to wait indefinitely for the transformation of the world in order to transform oneself. Thus, he took life and world affirmation to a loftier plane than Christ did.

- Dr. Albert Schweitzer

V. MEETING OF MINDS

Valluvar and Comenius

To Valluvar, the ultimate aim of education is spiritual awakening through self-realisation achieved by a process of elimination of the superfluous and transitory from the core of reality and truth. To him this life on earth is a preparation for eternity. He believed, as did John Amos Comenius (1592-1670) later, that "the ultimate end of man is eternal happiness with God".

-Prof. V.K.Sivaprakasam

Valluvar and Keats

The section of Thirukkural on love (*Kamattupal* or *Inbattupal*) is among the most sensuous poetry in the world, comparable only with the young outpourings of the heart of highly sensuous poets like Shakespeare, Milton and Keats. But there is in Thiruvalluvar's poetry this difference – it is not the poetry of the flesh alone or the sensuousness of the five senses alone, for him sex-love is the gateway to all the noblest things of life and all the highest pleasures of the intellect and the spirit. It is a spiritual ladder from the lowest earth to the highest heavens. Sex – the real sex as seen by Thiruvalluvar makes every moment the dawn of a new era of eternity as yet unknown even as, every step in knowledge opens up a vistas of unexplored expanses of knowledge as yet unknown (vide couplet 1110)

- K.Appadurai

Valluvar and Socrates

Kambar is the Homer and Thiruvalluvar, the Socrates of South India.

-Prof. T.Chelvakesavaraya Mudaliar

Valluvar and Plato

Thirukkural is worthy of the divine Plato himself.

-Rev. H.Bower

Valluvar and Christ

It is very interesting to see that Thiruvalluvar also, like Christ and the New Testament writers, has no prejudice against family life, or conjugal love or the sexual act. It is interesting because he is one of the few Indians who consider family life, conjugal love, and the sexual act as holy and good and elevating.

-Dr. Lawrence Gnanadurai

Valluvar and Brahma

Centuries ago, Saint Thiruvalluvar considered as an Avatara of Brahma, wrote the Thirukkural which contains in its 1330 couplets, all the wisdom and knowledge. This work has been a source of inspiration and practical guidance to the people of Tamilnadu for the ages. These verses have a style of their own-terse, simple, and direct – and it is regarded as wonderful and significant as the Gita.

- V.V.Giri

Yogi and Bhogi

Vemana is a Yogi and Valluvar is a Bhogi, and both show respect and regard for what they are not. Though Valluvar says much in praise of the life of a house-

holder, a grahasta, he extols equally the greatness of ascetics. According to Vemana, a bhogi or a Kaami alone qualifies to become a yogi. Valluvar seems to respect all ascetics alike. Not so Vemana. Being an ascetic or Yogi himself, Vemana knows that some ascetics are genuine and some are spurious. He says "Salt and camphor look alike, but when I examine and try to know the flavours, their tastes differ; thus do the virtuous difference between the real and the imposters from the ordinary."

-Dr. C.Radhakrishna Sarma

Valluvar and Tulasidasar

Thirukkural is like a counterpart of Tulasidasa's Ramayana in southern India, but Tulasidasa's Ramayana, though a much later work, was known to Gujarat much earlier than Thirukkural. This is because of the geographical situation of Gujarat, and its affinity of language with Hindi, rather than Tamil. Perhaps Thirukkural was known earlier to the western world than in modern Gujarat. Much credit goes to the earlier missionaries who presented in Latin, English, German and French, the translations of Thirukkural to the European people.

-Dr. K.M.Munshi

Valluvar and Kabir

Thiruvalluvar and Kabir are the beacon lights of the South and North of India, who have kept of the torch of wisdom ablaze through the ages of trials and tribulations in the history of our country.

They were the great synthesizers of the wisdom of various creeds to pave the path of liberation. Both of them are known for their progressive thinking and radical humanism.

The one presents the ancient Tamil wisdom in the light of Buddhism, Jainism and the Vedic lore. The other expresses the quintessence of the ancient Upanisadic thought and the nuances of Persian and Arabic culture.

-Dr. Ravindra Kumar Seth

Thiruvalluvar and Gurunanak

Both, Guru Nanak and Thiruvalluvar were householders cum Teachers. Domestic virtue, truth, purity, humility and charity form the favourite themes of some of their finest verses.. They were true and great teachers of men who are highly fortunate in possessing their inspiring, enlightening and everlasting teachings right in their own words.

-Dr. Harnam Singh Shan

Valluvar and Manickavachakar

Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural and Manickavachakar's Tiruvachakam are supposed to be the body and the soul respectively of Tamil, the beloved Mother. Atleast this is the faith of the Tamil Saivites. The one builds up the character and conduct of human beings while the other feeds their souls on a felicitous food of divine ambrosia and prepares them for the eternal Beatitude. The one develops the intellect and brain and makes men live a life of honour, dignity and honesty. The other purifies the soul of its dross and dirt and melts and moulds it in the pattern

of endless Bliss. The one lays the foundations for and the other actually builds up the kingdom of god in man. The one is the dawn of divinity and the other is its dazzling sun of the day. And both of them are complimentary to each other. Without Thirukkural's guidance no one can have his body and mind in the best of form. Without Tiruvachakam, no one can have his heart and soul quite healthy and whole. And both are necessary to build up the perfect man with a balanced development of body and soul. Thus it will be seen that Thirukkural and Tiruvachakam, which are considered to be the body and soul respectively of the blessed language of Tamil, are equally the nourishing food for the body and soul alike of the lucky students of both of them.

-Thiruvachagamani. K.M.Balasubramaniam

VI. NATIONAL INTEGRATION

National Scripture: Thirukkural

Our Mother India has National Anthem, National Flag and National Bird. It is, but appropriate that Mother India should have a national scripture.

The sacred Vedas and the divine Gita are undoubtedly great works, but they are per se caste-ridden, religious, mystical, pessimistic, and liturgical and lay stress on the other world. Thiruvalluvar stands above all races castes and sects and what he teaches is general human morality and wisdom.

The observations of the doyens of modern thoughts of the world clearly bear ample testimony to the universal outlook and humanistic fervour of Thirukkural.

No doubt, it will convince the impartial and discerning readers that of all the Indian classics, Thirukkural is well suited to be named as the National Scripture of India.

-Dr. V.Sp.Manickam

National Literature of India

Thirukkural reflects the culture of the Tamils in particular and the culture of the Bharat in general.

Thiruvalluvar was one of the great thinkers, whose catholic spirit rose above all denominations of caste, creed, language and country, whose vision was

not clouded by dogmas and prejudices of any kind. Hence, Valluvar has been called as the 'Bard of Universal Man' by Dr. G.U.Pope.

But, one can find the traits of national thought such as Ahimsa, the doctrine of Karma, the importance of the Domestic life, Hospitality and the unity in diversity in Thirukkural, which envisaged a new social order based on humanism which sounds so modern.

Valluvar inculcates the freedom of thought, speech and worship in several aphorisms which have been ensured by the 'Fathers of Indian Constitution' to the citizens of the Republic of India. Besides these features, Kural does not propagate the doctrines of any particular religion. So, it is the only literary composition and didactic work in India that teaches and preaches the value of secularism, which appears to be the most significant aspect of our Indian Constitution.

In the light of the above facts, Thirukkural alone deserves in the present context, to be recognised as the 'National Literature' of India.

-Prof. P.Alalasundaram

Main Source of National Integration

The Thirukkural of Thiruvalluvar is one of the oldest of the extant Tamil literature. The sacred Thirukkural is the best read Tamil work among the Tamils themselves. It also happens to be the best known and more often translated Tamil work in the various languages of the world.

Thiruvalluvar was one of those great men of India, whose catholic spirit rose above the denominations of

caste, creed, language and country and whose vision was not clouded by dogmas or prejudice of any kind. So, he stands as one of the main source for the cause of national integration of India.

-Dr. N.Sanjeevi

Thiruvalluvar created his masterpiece surpassing all the contemporary thinkers of the Vedic, Buddhist and Jain religions, and at the same time assimilating all those noble ideals in the contents of his work to make it a cultural illustration of civility and bravery of the Tamils as propounded in scores of grammatical works. "Thirukkural", which he contributed to the humanity 2000 years ago, is the guiding light that transcends all ages, and its message intended not merely for his own age, his own Tamil people or country but appropriate for all times-past, present and future-and for all mankind. Thirukkural is the special signet, symbol and emblem of the Tamil Society.

- Alagappa Rammohan

Thiruvalluvar's Kural is one of the gems of the world literature. He stands above all races, castes, and sects, and what he teaches is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder, that the Kural has been read, studied and highly praised in the land of its origin for centuries, but also found many admirers in the west, ever since it has become known.

- Professor M. Winternitz

What are wanted for the Indian as for the Englishman, the Frenchman, the German, and the Russian, are not Constitutions and Revolutions, nor all

sorts of Conferences and Congresses, nor the many ingenious devices for submarine navigation and aerial navigation, nor powerful explosives, nor all sorts of conveniences to add to the enjoyment of the rich, ruling classes; nor gramophones and cinematographs, not those childish and for the most part corrupt stupidities termed art-but one thing only is needful: the knowledge of the simple and clear truth which finds place in every soul that is not stupefied by religious and scientific superstitions – the truth that for our life one law is valid- the law of love, which brings the highest happiness to every individual as well as to all mankind.

- Tolstoy

VII. TREASURE FOR THE POSTERITY

Monument of the Genius of the Tamils

The "Kural" is the crowning glory of Tamil Culture. It is the most valuable and cherished possession of air race.

If the Englishman would sooner give up his empire, I have a shrewd suspicion, however, that John Bull would not do any such thing in a hurry to lose Shakespeare, we Tamilians may similarly boast that we would rather lose all the other mighty monuments of our civilisation like our temples and palaces and even the sources of our existence, the Cauvery and the Tamprabharni, than the Thirukkural. To my mind this single incomparable, wonderful book is worth more than the whole of Lord Macaulay's library and, for the matter of that, than any collection of Western or Eastern Literature (except the Bible and one or two other sacred Books) ancient, modern or ultra modern.

-S.M. Michael

The Only Book

Thirukural, is the overwhelmingly positive reply one gets from a Tamil speaking man or woman living in any part of the globe to the question what would

you plump for, if you are left with no choice but to choose only one book, of a the books in the world ?

It is referred to as the Tamil Scripture which term is used not to denote the scripture of the Tamils exclusively, but to, the scripture written in the Tamil language.

-K.C.Kamaliah

Above all I believe that the outstanding works of Tamil literature of the past, and the very interesting writings of the present times, should be translated, published and spread wide, they intrinsically belongs to the literary heritage of the world and man's culture will be enriched by their general knowledge.

- Kamil Zvelebil

Sobriquettes for KURAL

1. The Art of Living
2. The Science of Living
3. The Universal Scripture
4. The Scripture for Mankind
5. The Immortal Classic of Morals
6. Human Conscience
7. Cream of Ethical Values
8. Ocean of Righteousness
9. Code of Morals
10. Glory of Tamils
11. Gospel of Truth
12. Book of Maxims
13. Oriental Caravan
14. Treasure of Literary Art
15. Literature of Wisdom
16. Book of Egalitarianism
17. Bible of Mankind
18. Tamil Marai
19. Podu Marai
20. Tamil Veda
21. Guide for The Soul
22. Text Book on Moral Life
23. Vision of An Ideal Humanity
24. Companion to Life
25. Collection of Sublime Thoughts
26. Intellectual Wealth of Tamils
27. Philosophical Treatise
28. Classic of Non-Violence
29. Treasure House of Wisdom
30. Masterpiece of Classical Tamil



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. M. Rajaram is an exceptional IAS officer with a Doctorate Degree in Human Resource Development.

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He has brought the English translation of Thirukkural for which Dr.Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, has paid rich tributes.

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